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General Assembly

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Disarmament Commission

202nd Meeting
Tuesday, 23 April 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Hoffmann . . . . . (Germany)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

General exchange of views *(continued)*

Mr. Hahm (Republic of Korea): First of all, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Korea, I should like to extend my warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the 1996 session of the Disarmament Commission. We are fully confident that your able leadership and broad experience in the field of disarmament will help guide the 1996 substantive session of the Commission to a particularly successful and productive outcome. I take this opportunity to assure you that you can count on the full support and cooperation of my delegation as you oversee the tasks and challenges facing this Commission.

My congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau on their election. And, last but not least, I wish to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia for his outstanding contribution during last year's session of this Commission.

Each State is vested with the inherent right to acquire arms for its own defence, including arms from outside sources. The Korean delegation believes, however, that international arms transfers must be addressed within the context of maintaining international peace and security and reducing tensions at the international, regional and subregional levels. We are of the view that an enhanced level of transparency in international arms transfers contributes not only to restraining the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms, but also to curbing the practice of illicit arms transfers. In this regard, more effective, progressive efforts should be undertaken by the international community to attract the widest possible participation in the Register of Conventional Arms established by General Assembly resolution 46/36 H.

My delegation feels that the concerted efforts of the international community to establish uniform standards for international arms control and for regulating the exports and imports of arms are essential for eradicating the illicit arms trade, and that the United Nations should play a catalytic role in further enhancing cooperation at the global, regional and subregional levels. In the course of deliberations on this issue during this substantive session of the Commission, my delegation looks forward to working further on the Chairman's working paper on guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H, which will serve as an excellent basis for discussion; we would support all endeavours to successfully conclude a consensus paper.

We now have before us an important issue: the proposed fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. There is no precedent for this: the General Assembly has never convened a special session concerned with the same subject four times. This clearly shows that the international community attaches primary importance to the task of disarmament. While measurable progress has been made in the field of disarmament since the first special session in 1978, the aspirations of the peoples of the world for substantial measures towards disarmament and arms control are stronger than ever.

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In this regard, my delegation is of the view that the fourth special session will provide an opportunity to review the progress achieved thus far and to make more systematic and progressive efforts towards general and complete disarmament in the post-cold-war era. However, careful account should be taken of the timing of the session, the agenda to be discussed and other relevant questions, in order that the special session may bring about meaningful results in this area. My delegation looks forward to useful discussions on this issue during the substantive session of this Commission.

Finally, I should like to touch upon the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones. My delegation is convinced that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is one of the most effective means to bring about a global non-proliferation regime. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the signing of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty on 11 April in Cairo and congratulates all African nations on this historic achievement, which came after 32 years of determined efforts. This momentous Treaty of Pelindaba will undoubtedly make a substantial contribution to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to further strengthening the international non-proliferation regime. My delegation sincerely looks forward to the early and effective implementation of the Treaty.

Another welcome development was witnessed in connection with the Treaty of Rarotonga, which was consolidated last month by the signing by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of its Protocols. My delegation is also pleased to note that the Treaty on the South-East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone was successfully concluded in December last year. These developments give us a renewed impetus towards our common goal of creating a world in which nuclear weapons will be forever proscribed.

Availing itself of this opportunity, my delegation would like to remind all representatives of the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which was signed in full agreement by the two Koreas in December 1991. Under the Joint Declaration, both parties pledged not to test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons. They also renounced the possession of nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities to further enhance nuclear transparency on the Korean Peninsula. Moreover, the Declaration provides an effective verification regime through the establishment of the Joint Nuclear Control Commission and mutual inspection.

However, my delegation regrets that the Joint Declaration has not to date been implemented. We look forward to its immediate implementation, which will serve as an effective means of ensuring peace and security on the Korean Peninsula.

In conclusion, I should like to assure you once again, Sir, that my delegation is fully prepared to assume a productive role towards the successful outcome of this Commission.

Mr. Owada (Japan): At the outset of my intervention, let me extend my congratulations to Your Excellency, Ambassador Hoffmann of the Federal Republic of Germany, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission for this year. I am confident that under your able guidance, the 1996 substantive session of the Commission will be a particularly fruitful one. I wish to assure you of the full cooperation of the delegation of Japan as you discharge your important responsibilities.

Today I should like to comment briefly on the two substantive agenda items agreed upon so far for this session: first, the issue of international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991; and secondly, the issue of the proposed fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The issue of international arms transfers has long been a major focus of disarmament and security concerns. The question has gained even greater urgency with the eruption since the end of the cold war of numerous internal and regional conflicts stemming from religious, ethnic and racial rivalries. The illicit trafficking in arms, which has been linked to international terrorist activities and drug trafficking, has also drawn considerable international attention, as reflected in the various resolutions that have been adopted by the General Assembly.

The Disarmament Commission has been conducting deliberations on international arms transfers since its 1994 session. The issue is an extremely complex one, since the problem of arms transfers is closely linked to security, political and economic considerations as well as to the legal systems of each country. Since these factors differ from country to country, our task of setting international guidelines is by no means an easy one. Nevertheless, my delegation strongly hopes, Sir, that under your wise and excellent leadership, our intensive

discussion of the subject will yield concrete progress on this vital issue.

As the 1991 report of governmental experts entitled "Ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms" pointed out, international transfers of conventional arms often take place in an environment veiled in secrecy. It is my delegation's view that greater openness and transparency will help to restrain such transfers. I believe it is appropriate in this context to stress the important role that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is playing. My delegation notes with satisfaction that in the three years since the Register was established, the number of participating countries has steadily increased; in fact, as of 12 February this year, 93 countries had submitted reports. This attests to the importance that many countries attach to the United Nations Register system as a global confidence-building mechanism. The Government of Japan strongly hopes that the Register will come to cover arms transfers by all countries, and encourages Member States that have not yet done so to join this system as early as possible.

In this connection, there is an impression that some countries are not at present reporting to the Register. They feel that they do not have to do so, as they have not engaged in any arms transfers for them to report. However, it would be most helpful if such countries could submit what are termed "nil reports", as this would give a clear indication of their political commitment to the Register. I wish to urge strongly that these countries do so, since the registration of such countries is just as important as that of countries with actual transfers to report.

As for the question of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, it will be recalled that the General Assembly decided, with the adoption of resolution 50/70 F, to convene such a session in 1997 if possible. In the past, special sessions on disarmament have been held in 1978, 1982 and 1988; they proved highly useful. On this basis, my delegation fully understands the claim that it is time to convene another such conference, after an interval of almost a decade since the last one. The question that we should address is whether the fourth special session is likely to achieve the desired results if it is held at this juncture.

The objective of these special sessions is, of course, to promote disarmament, and in particular nuclear disarmament. This objective is being vigorously pursued in various forums at the moment.

Bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Russian Federation to reduce nuclear stockpiles are making progress. Also, beginning in 1997, preparatory committee meetings will be held each year to lay the groundwork for the next non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference in the year 2000. This review process, to be conducted on the basis of the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament adopted at last year's NPT Review and Extension Conference, will certainly cover a far wider range of nuclear disarmament issues and will do so in much greater depth than a special session of the General Assembly could do if it were held at this point.

In such circumstances, it is the considered view of the Government of Japan that such a session would certainly be desirable at a suitable future stage, but that at this stage we should attempt, as a matter of priority, to achieve as much as possible through the ongoing scheduled efforts that I have just mentioned. On the basis of an examination of the results of such efforts, a further thorough exchange of views on the timing, agenda and objectives of a special session on disarmament could more usefully be conducted. I might also add that convening a special session would place a serious financial burden on the United Nations budget, which is already strained.

It was in view of these considerations that my Government abstained in the voting on General Assembly resolution 50/70 F.

The Chairman: I can only emphasize the remarks of the representative of Japan on nil reports for the Arms Register, as I have also served on the Secretary-General's group of experts on this subject.

Mr. Nkurlu (United Republic of Tanzania): Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to join previous speakers in extending our congratulations to you, Sir, upon your election to the chairmanship of this substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Our tribute goes also to the rest of the members of the Bureau; we are confident that your leadership will help guide this session to a successful conclusion.

Let me at the outset express my delegation's disappointment and frustration at the failure of this Commission last year to reach a consensus on two important items: "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons" and

"Review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade". This was a major setback in the work of the Commission, considering that both items were poised to contribute positively to international peace and security. We are still of the view that the continued possession of nuclear weapons by a few countries encourages further proliferation of these deadly weapons while at the same time being a major source of instability and destabilization the world over.

The Commission's prolongation of the item on nuclear disarmament in 1994 for an additional year was done on optimistic note with a view to facilitating the success of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). However, contrarily, the indefinite extension of the NPT made it easier for this item to be put to rest, thus conferring legitimacy on the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by a few countries without any commitment to checking qualitative and quantitative proliferation. Efforts in various United Nations forums to achieve a legal instrument for a time-bound framework to eradicate such weapons have been systematically thwarted.

Nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction have become a menace to our civilized society. According to recent press reports, the threat of nuclear terrorist attack is real. We are told that virtually the entire world is vulnerable to this kind of attack and, on an even more serious note, that it is just a matter of time. The big question which continues to taunt the international community is "when?". Should the world wait until it happens? Indeed, we must endeavour to come to terms with the fact that international diplomacy, and not the nuclear arms race pursued on the pretext of deterrence, is the cornerstone of world peace and security.

It is in this light that the item entitled "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament" affords us yet another opportunity to re-examine the arms control and disarmament machinery and to ensure that it conforms to the realities of the day. We look forward to the convening of the session in 1997 and to addressing pertinent disarmament issues commensurate with the expectations and aspirations of the twenty-first century.

Tanzania recognizes and welcomes the progress made by the United States and Russia towards nuclear disarmament. We urge them and other nuclear-weapon States, however, to go the extra mile and take further strides towards agreeing on a time-bound framework for eliminating those weapons, since the current international environment has rendered them economically burdensome and militarily irrelevant.

In the same vein, we take cognizance of the progress made in the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty taking place in Geneva and of the recent pledge of the Group of 7 and Russia to complete these negotiations by 1996 and have the treaty ready for signature this September. We believe that the conclusion of the treaty will further enhance the process of the disarmament of nuclear arsenals in favour of a peaceful world.

On the item "International arms transfers of 6 December 1991, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H", substantial progress has already been made, and we expect its conclusion this session. The problem of the illicit transfer of arms has brought untold suffering to various parts of the world. The problem has reached alarming proportions, with devastating consequences for human life and property.

In the spirit of international cooperation, major producers of conventional arms, with their advanced technology, should lead the way in curbing the practice of illicit arms transfers, especially in areas fraught with armed conflict. Recipient countries or factions should also refrain from soliciting illicit arms since they bring only misery, poverty, insecurity and instability to the respective areas. We sincerely hope that this item will be successfully concluded during this session.

My delegation regrets the lack of consensus on a nuclear disarmament item for preliminary deliberations at this session. While Tanzania supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the context of regional disarmament, we strongly believe that these efforts ought to be complemented at the global level by the firm political will of major nuclear-weapon States to eradicate these weapons of mass destruction. We therefore reiterate our consistent position in favour of multilateral forums as the best places to negotiate and resolve arms control and disarmament issues.

As you discharge your duties, Sir, we pledge our continued support and cooperation to ensure the success of this session.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt): At the outset, allow me to convey to you, Sir, my delegation's warmest congratulations on your unanimous election to the

chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission this year and to express my delegation's confidence that, under your capable guidance, the Commission will be able to fulfil successfully its mandate for this session. I should like also to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Erdenechuluun for his excellent chairmanship of the 1995 session of the Commission.

The importance of the work of the Disarmament Commission has been questioned for the past few years, due to the fact that the Commission has not been able to achieve consensus on concrete results for submission to the General Assembly on the items "Role of science and technology", "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons" and "Review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade".

In my delegation's view, the failure of the Disarmament Commission to achieve consensus on these and perhaps on other topics at previous sessions was due to the lack of political will on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to achieve any results in our work in the field of nuclear disarmament at a time when the non-nuclear-weapon States stood ready for discussions and compromise. Unfortunately, what was asked by the nuclear-weapon States was beyond any compromise, because it touched on the principles and objectives of our work in the Disarmament Commission, in particular in the field of nuclear disarmament.

The status of our current work in the Disarmament Commission is a clear reflection of the global status of disarmament work elsewhere, including on nuclear disarmament. The failure of the last three review processes of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was due to the same reason: a lack of political will on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to take positive steps towards providing legally-binding guarantees to the non-nuclear-weapon States and to commit themselves to the elimination of nuclear weapons within a well-defined time-frame. The lack of considerable progress at the last two special sessions devoted to disarmament, and the fact that the Final Document and agenda of the first special session, adopted in 1978, are still the cornerstones of the work in the field of disarmament, provide vivid testimony to the lack of agreement on how to approach disarmament issues, despite fundamental changes in the political climate in the past few years.

My delegation therefore continues to attach great importance to the work of the Disarmament Commission and to its positive contributions in enhancing our disarmament efforts in other forums. We shall continue to oppose proposals made in other General Assembly organs to make the Commission's sessions biennial or to reduce permanently the services allocated to it. The fact that my delegation agreed on the compromise to have the Commission convene its session this year for two weeks plus one day — due to the acute financial crisis of the United Nations — does not constitute any precedent for the work of the Commission, which should return to its three-week sessions beginning at its 1997 session and continue to have three substantive items on its agenda.

In this regard, the third item proposed on nuclear-weapon-free zones, supported by a large number of delegations, will provide an opportunity to revive the positive impact of our work in the Disarmament Commission, particularly in view of the latest positive developments in this regard: the signature by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of the relevant Protocols of the Rarotonga Treaty; the signature in Cairo of the Treaty establishing an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone — the Pelindaba Treaty; and the adoption of the Cairo Declaration on that historic occasion.

The Cairo Declaration emphasized that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in regions of tension such as the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned, enhances global and regional peace and security. It called upon all those States who have not yet done so to adhere to the non-proliferation Treaty.

This clear recognition by the African States of the serious situation in the Middle East resulting from the existence in Israel, which is not a party to the NPT, of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and from Israel's acquisition of ambiguous nuclear capabilities, is a clear addition to the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995. We expect that further action will be taken to ensure implementation of that resolution, particularly in view of recent reports indicating possible radioactive leakage from nuclear facilities in Israel.

The signature of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty on 11 April 1996, and the adoption of the Cairo Declaration, marked the first anniversary of Security Council resolution 984 (1995) of 11 April 1995, on security assurances against the use of nuclear weapons

to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. My delegation took that opportunity to remind the Security Council of its role in the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments in accordance with Article 26 of the United Nations Charter.

The Security Council, in a statement made by its President on behalf of members of the Council, adopted on 12 April, noted with deep satisfaction the signature of the African Nu lear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and reaffirmed the statement made by the President on behalf of members of the Council at the meeting held at the level of Heads of State or Government on 31 January 1992 that the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security. We express the hope that the Security Council will be able to take extra measures in the direction of safeguarding the security of non-nuclear-weapon States in accordance with the provisions of its resolution 984 (1995).

Egypt is among the strong supporters of the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Our support is based on the need to reflect the fundamental changes in international relations following the end of the cold war and the appearance of a new world order based on cooperation, not confrontation, thus establishing an atmosphere far more conducive to concentrating on disarmament efforts, particularly nuclear disarmament, within a well defined time-frame.

In our work on this topic, we should build on our achievements in the Final Document and agenda of the first special session devoted to disarmament, which constitute models to be followed in our preparation of the results of the fourth special session. Particular reference should be made in this regard to paragraph 45 of the Final Document of the first special session, which states that:

> "Priorities in disarmament negotiations shall be: nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons; conventional weapons, including any which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effect; and reduction of armed forces". (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Tenth Special Session, Supplement No.4 (A/S-10/4), para. 45*)

This is the point we believe we must build on, a point that will require the full positive political will of all parties, particularly the nuclear-weapon States.

Some delegations might claim that the time is not right for such a session to take place. We look forward to hearing their points of view and stand ready to respond to them. My delegation will be ready with an open mind to discuss all issues in order to help achieve the desired results and to present our detailed comments in the Working Group.

One final remark on this subject: Our consideration of this topic here in the Disarmament Commission is aimed at revealing trends of thought and arguments with a view to facilitating our work in the Preparatory Committee established under resolution 50/70 F to prepare a draft agenda for the special session, to examine all relevant questions relating to that session and to submit its recommendations thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. It is not intended to be a parallel channel or a substitute for the preparatory work to be undertaken by the Preparatory Committee. Moreover, our work on this subject is aimed, from our point of view, at convincing those who have doubts about the utility of having a special session devoted to disarmament at this stage, of the positive impact of convening a fourth special session devoted to disarmament in 1997 to review the progress in the entire field of disarmament in the post-cold-war era, especially noting the expected conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty currently being negotiated in Geneva. In this regard, I would like to reaffirm Egypt's full support to the early conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty.

In resolution 50/70 J the General Assembly requested that the United Nations Disarmament Commission expedite its consideration of the agenda item on international arms transfers, with special emphasis on the adverse consequences of the illicit transfer of arms and ammunition. It also requested the Disarmament Commission to study and report on measures to curb the illicit transfer and use of conventional arms, bearing in mind concrete problems in various regions of the world.

The delegation of Egypt expresses its satisfaction that Working Group II was able in 1995 to achieve notable progress on the scope, structure and elements of draft guidelines for international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991. Meanwhile, we still hold the view that the draft guidelines do not contain a clear cut distinction between licit and illicit arms transfers, particularly in view of the complex process of identifying the ultimate recipients of arms.

One of the major questions to be addressed by Working Group I at this session is the legitimate right of peoples under occupation or foreign domination to acquire arms in their struggle to achieve independence and self-determination. This should be clearly distinguished from illicit arms transfers to terrorist groups, which have different objectives. My delegation will take active part in the endeavours of Working Group I to finalize the draft guidelines this session, and will present our detailed comments on this issue at meetings of the Group.

Finally, I would like to support the views expressed by several delegations on the need to prepare a standing list of agenda items for consideration by the Disarmament Commission at its future sessions, on the pattern followed by the Conference on Disarmament. The preparation of such a list would prevent the painful negotiating process that took place this year to agree on a nuclear item for the agenda of the Disarmament Commission, for the difference in approach between nuclear States, members of the Non-Aligned Movement and non-nuclear-weapon States was a great obstacle to achieving progress in this regard.

I must register my delegation's disappointment over the serious situation the Disarmament Commission finds itself in: while the majority of Member States support the inclusion of a nuclear item on the agenda, at the moment the lack of agreement by a few delegations is standing in the way.

We strongly agree that the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission should be based on the agreement of all Members of the Commission; but we feel that this position is giving advantage to those nuclear States to block the will of the majority. We wonder whether the Commission should allow one or a few delegations to decide whether to have or not to have a specific item that has been agreed by the majority; and we wonder, moreover, whether we should consider further the procedures adopted in 1994, in order to prevent the recurrence of such situations.

We hope that the 1996 session of the Disarmament Commission will be a turning-point towards the positive side. We shall cooperate fully with you, Mr. Chairman, and with the Chairmen of the Working Groups in order to achieve our desired results.

Mr. Poernomo (Indonesia): On behalf of the Indonesian delegation, Sir, I would like to extend our warmest congratulations to you on your unanimous election to preside over the Disarmament Commission. We have every confidence that your able leadership and broad experience in the field of disarmament will help to guide the 1996 substantive session of the Commission to a particularly successful and productive outcome. I should like also to extend our sincere gratitude to the representative of Mongolia for the successful way in which he chaired the Disarmament Commission last year.

During the past year, some encouraging developments have taken place in arms limitation and disarmament. Last December, the leaders of the 10 South-East Asian States met at the Fourth Summit Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), in Bangkok, and signed the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. Concurrently, the leaders of ASEAN unanimously called for the recognition of this region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Of exceptional importance is the Cairo Declaration of 11 April 1996, adopted on the occasion of the signature of the Treaty of Pelindaba, which establishes a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the continent of Africa. These are both building blocks in our continuing endeavours for a denuclearized global order.

Though now behind schedule, there are indications that negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament for a ban on nuclear tests can still be completed for submission to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

On the negative side, however, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II) is yet to be implemented, and the pursuit of further deep cuts in nuclear armaments is yet to begin. Meanwhile, the technological sophistication of weapons has grown unabated.

As regards agenda items, my delegation has in the past expressed its views in this forum on the question of international arms transfers. Hence, it is hardly necessary to reiterate them. Suffice it to note that an approach to this complex question should be based on four cardinal principles. First, it should be viewed in the context of weapons needed by newly-independent countries to consolidate their hard-won freedom and to ensure their self-defence capabilities. Secondly, they should be regarded as essential components of regional and subregional security and cooperation. Thirdly, efforts at reducing and curbing conventional armaments should be placed within a comprehensive context, focusing on both supplier and recipient countries, rather than on particular

groups of States. Fourthly, the issue of illicit transfers and acquisitions of armaments, especially in conflict-ridden areas, can be dealt with more effectively through control over national production of armaments, as well as import and export policies, coupled with greater coordination at both the regional and the global levels. It is my delegation's hope that our deliberation on this question will lead to recommendations based on consensus.

As far as a fourth special session devoted to disarmament is concerned, its importance cannot be overemphasized, considering that the third special session devoted to disarmament met eight years ago, in 1988. Meanwhile, significant developments have taken place in the field of disarmament, albeit with a myriad of unresolved issues which call for a reassessment of our disarmament agenda and the formulation of new strategies and approaches.

It is instructive to recall that General Assembly resolution 50/70 F called upon Member States to decide on the dates of the substantive session during a brief organizational session of the Preparatory Committee prior to the end of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. It also calls for convening, if possible, the fourth special session devoted to disarmament in 1997.

As far as the organizational session is concerned, Indonesia and other non-aligned countries have stated their preference for convening the Preparatory Committee in July this year. Furthermore, it is my delegation's view that there should be reasonable intervals between each of the scheduled Preparatory Committee meetings so that Member States can adequately prepare for the tasks which will surely face them at the fourth special session devoted to disarmament. There also appears to be a limited time span from the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee to the convening of the special session itself. Hence, it is essential to proceed with all deliberate speed if we are to ensure a successful session resulting in a consensus document.

The determination of the substantive agenda items to be considered at the special session is of particular importance. First and foremost, the objective set out in the 1978 Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, namely, nuclear disarmament and the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction, should remain the highest priority and the principal task of our time.

Notwithstanding the significant strides made in limiting and eliminating nuclear armaments, we have not overcome the profoundly negative consequences of the nuclear-arms race unleashed during the cold-war era. It cannot be denied that the continued existence of vast arsenals of nuclear weapons with enormous destructive capacity still poses an unacceptable threat to humanity.

Hence, there is an imperative need to continue to build on the agreements and to transform them into a platform for more determined efforts towards nuclear disarmament, leading to multilateral accords on the elimination of nuclear armaments. In particular, concrete steps are required for the further reduction of strategic arsenals, for stemming the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, for renewed efforts towards the establishment of new zones free of these weapons and for non-use of fissile materials for weapons purposes.

To further the process of nuclear disarmament, it will also be necessary to continue to have recourse to all possible approaches — multilateral, regional, bilateral and unilateral — as well as to all existing mechanisms. In my delegation's view, those are the issues that should be of special concern to the forthcoming fourth special session devoted to disarmament, as they represent a continuing threat to international peace and security.

In this context, we would endorse an agenda with specific components and characteristics. It should include the formulation of basic principles and general guidelines for arms control and disarmament within an overall system of international security that would eventually replace the current nuclear arrangements. We also realize that the agenda should include conventional armaments. While the validity and relevance of regional approaches would be reaffirmed, global approaches should be drawn on as appropriate. Finally, institutional arrangements would have to be reviewed, particularly the obstacles faced in the Conference on Disarmament on nuclear issues and the resulting need for the improved and effective functioning of the Conference.

The agenda of the fourth special session devoted to disarmament would include points — as follows — to reflect the challenges and opportunities of a changing international order: all aspects of nuclear weapons, at both the regional and international levels including, *inter alia*, a cutoff of radioactive materials as a complementary step towards nuclear disarmament, a progressive reduction of stockpiles, a ban on fissile materials for weapons purposes, and multilaterally negotiated

guidelines on the transfer of technology for peaceful purposes; other weapons of mass destruction; an international convention to prohibit the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; conventional armaments; reduction of military budgets; reduction of armed forces; collateral, confidence-building and verification measures; and the role of the United Nations in disarmament.

These areas, while not exhaustive, offer a wide range of possibilities for a contemporary arms limitation and disarmament agenda.

Before concluding, I should like to refer to the fact that we have only two substantive items on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission, while consultations are being conducted among delegations on a third item. My delegation believes that this should neither constitute a precedent nor detract from the importance of the item. We remain hopeful that it will prove possible to agree on a third item. Indonesia has always upheld the integrity and continuity of the Disarmament Commission's practices, and hopes that it will be possible to initiate deliberations on a third item as in the past.

Mr. Ayewah (Nigeria): I wish, as all others have done before me, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the Chairman of the 1996 session of the Disarmament Commission. You have the important duty of redeeming the Disarmament Commission from the shock and the aftermath of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as we continue to discuss the burning issues of disarmament. With your well-known diplomatic skill and profound understanding of the subject-matter, my delegation is convinced that under your stewardship the Disarmament Commission will be able to respond to the purpose of its establishment as a deliberative subsidiary organ of the General Assembly open to the entire membership.

My delegation owes a debt of appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, for the admirable manner in which he discharged his duties as Chairman of the Commission in 1995. We also seize the opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. Let me, in passing, assure you, Mr. Chairman, that you can count on Nigeria's support and cooperation in the discharge of your duties.

Fifty years is a relatively short period in history, but not in the life of an individual; in many traditions, a 50-year old human being is considered to be advanced in age and in wisdom. Our Organization celebrated 50 years of existence last year, and this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the first General Assembly resolution, which expressed the resolve of the international community to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Having had these 50 years, we should by now have left behind cold-war disposition and the mind-set of nuclear confrontation. Indeed, the end of the cold war opened a window of opportunity which we have so far exploited only in a limited manner. Unfortunately, we do not have time for interminable discussions, and complications are beginning to emerge in areas in which agreements had previously been or were about to be achieved.

My delegation is aware of some recent and more or less isolated positive happenings in the field of disarmament which may be considered commendable. These developments, however, have not prevented the emergence of security crises in strategic locations and on strategic issues. The disagreement that persists in the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty in Geneva, the inability to achieve a mandate for negotiating a fissile material cut-off, the lack of progress in the area of negative security assurances and the impossibility of moving forward in the discussion of a realistic plan for nuclear disarmament all belie the principles and objectives listed as targets for nuclear non-proliferation and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In the light of the foregoing, my delegation considers that this session of the Commission should serve to arouse the international community from the lull and self-commendation that set in at the end of the cold war, and to sensitize it to the fact that humanity is approaching a new millennium. In this connection, we must say that disarmament goes beyond the voluntary disposition of the nuclear-weapon States to disarm, however desirable that may be and the achievements it may well portend. It goes beyond the negotiating efforts of the Conference on Disarmament, which are sometimes sporadic and often lacklustre. It is a subject that concerns all of us, because it impinges directly on the maintenance of international peace and security, in which we all have an interest.

It is therefore very timely for us to begin to talk about a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which we hope will evaluate our successes and failures and chart the way forward. There

is no doubt that we are at a critical juncture in international relations: 50 years of the United Nations, a post-cold-war era that needs a new security doctrine, and the approach of a new millennium. No one can reasonably insist that there is nothing extraordinary about this time to warrant the injection of new vigour into the international disarmament agenda. I am certain that our exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament will result in a consensus on the necessity to review and revive the process of disarmament in anticipation of the twenty-first century.

My delegation is pleased with the progress that we made at the last session under your able leadership, Sir, on the item on international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991. We look forward to the successful completion at this session of our work on the subject. Indeed, my Government attaches utmost importance to guidelines and recommendations on matters of arms control and disarmament that are negotiated in this forum, in the Conference on Disarmament and in the General Assembly.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, although not yet a perfect instrument for measuring transparency on the part of Member States, is to us a useful tool for promoting confidence-building and, in the long run, arms control. In a recent study, it was stated that even though the Register was still far from its goal of universal participation, most major importing and exporting States have participated regularly in its three years of operation. It was also noted that the Register would sooner or later become the source of official information that could be used as a legitimate basis for diplomatic discussions at the global level.

We would have thought that this was fair enough and that the steady progress in this area should be further encouraged. However, the arms-exporting nations continue to proliferate exclusive clubs which take unilateral decisions and set their own criteria and codes of conduct for controlling the transfers of conventional arms and dual-use materials and technologies. These exclusive clubs undermine negotiations carried out at the global level and render global agreements of little effect. They lead to abuse on the part of the exporters and to illegalities in international arms transfers. If our efforts here are to bear fruit and yield the expected results on the international scene, such exclusivé clubs must not only be transparent, but must be seen to be so.

Earlier on, I noted that the Chairman has the onerous task of guiding the Commission at this session as it faces the extraordinary problem of finding a third substantive agenda item. There is a seeming paralysis in multilateral efforts on disarmament. The Commission has particularly suffered. It has had the duration of its substantive session shortened two years in a row. Last year, we could not agree on two important items out of three. This year we are even finding it difficult to agree on what to discuss.

At the end of this session, when we have completed work on the two substantive items currently on the agenda, we shall need to find three or at least two new items for the next session. Imagine the difficulties we will then have to confront. We must therefore continue in our efforts to get a third item for the current session for as long as delegations are willing to continue consultations on it.

Let me reiterate that the Disarmament Commission is the only avenue open to developing countries and to non-members of the Conference on Disarmament to give focused attention to disarmament matters and participate in matters that directly concern their security. If the Commission is reduced in importance by errors of omission or commission, that will constitute a disservice to the aspirations of the international community in their justified bid to live in peace and security. As a delegation, Nigeria cannot subscribe to this.

Mr. Surie (India): At the outset, I should like to extend warm felicitations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Commission. The Disarmament Commission is indeed privileged to have an expert as eminent as yourself in the Chair. Our congratulations also extend to the other newly-elected members of the Bureau. May I also take this opportunity to pay a warm tribute to Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia for his leadership of the Disarmament Commission last year. We welcome his election as Chairman of the Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We also wish to congratulate Mr. Chirila of Romania on his election as Chairman of the Working Group on international arms transfers.

The ultimate objective of disarmament is to ensure durable peace and the enhancement of security for all. This basic objective has remained constant through the years, but the approaches and scope of negotiations have changed along with changes in the international political

environment. The two items now on the Commission's agenda for this year, on which deliberations will be focused — "International arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991" and "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament" — are indeed timely. Appropriate decisions on them could substantially contribute to the cause of disarmament and peace.

The question of arms transfers can basically be divided into two categories. One relates to licit State-to-State transfers; the second, to the question of illicit arms transfers. States have legitimate defence requirements related to their security concerns. The question of what constitutes these legitimate requirements involves an objective assessment of national threat perceptions. However, arms transfers need to be transparent and not to aggravate tensions in any region. The establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms seeks to address these concerns by increasing the transparency of such transfers.

The end of the cold war has not led to the cessation of all conflicts. The question of illicit arms transfers has, on the contrary, become a matter of growing concern and is a dangerous and disturbing phenomenon. It is this aspect that we must continue to focus on in our work.

In his message to the Conference on Disarmament at the opening of its 1996 session, the Secretary-General said that the illicit arms trade is a serious threat to national and international security. The impact of the illicit arms trade on the social stability of countries and its destructive consequences — fueling terrorism, destabilizing activities, drug trafficking, organized crime and mercenary activities — are dangers to which all countries are subject today. This is clearly reflected in resolution 46/36 H. Furthermore, at the Eleventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cartagena, the Heads of State or Government urged States to ensure an adequate body of national legislation to deal effectively with the problem of illicit transfers of arms. They called upon States to cooperate at the international level in the exchange of information on possible ways and means to deal with the illicit transfer of arms.

This question pertains, *inter alia*, to the diversion of arms to non-State entities. Conceptually, due to its inherently clandestine nature, the illicit arms trade does not easily lend itself to the promotion of transparency. There is at present a lack of legal control to minimize or prevent the flow of weapons at the national, regional and international levels. Difficulties in curbing illicit arms transfers are compounded by the lack of an empirical database from which to develop appropriate policies for more effective controls. This problem therefore requires urgent international action. It will require innovative means for international cooperation and consultation to control such transfers. Clearly, the objective of such cooperation must be to eradicate illicit arms transfers through tighter national controls, exchange of information, harmonization of national policies and unequivocal condemnation by the international community.

The Chairman's working paper annexed to last year's report of the Disarmament Commission, which will be the starting-point of our work at this session, provides, in our view, a good basis for addressing the issue. We look forward to finalizing that paper and to achieving consensus on this important issue.

The new agenda item before us relates to the exchange of views on the fourth special session devoted to disarmament and will, *inter alia*, provide a timely opportunity to review the progress in the field of disarmament in the changed post-cold-war context. It will also provide us with an opportunity to identify the issues which will have to be addressed at the meetings of the Preparatory Committee of the special session with a view to facilitating the development of a blueprint for a genuine disarmament plan.

It may be recalled that the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament contained, in clear terms, a Programme of Action with objectives, priorities, measures and stages of implementation. The fourth special session should, in our view, thus review the progress made in that Programme of Action and assess the developments and trends in the disarmament field since then.

The Indian action plan submitted at the third special session outlines a stage-wise methodology leading towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in a time-bound framework and the building of a new world order based not on militarization and threat, but on scrupulous adherence to the principles of peaceful coexistence and the United Nations Charter. It is our expectation that the fourth special session will clearly point the way towards a non-violent world free of nuclear weapons.

The Disarmament Commission remains an important universal deliberative organ of the disarmament machinery. We assure you, Sir, of the cooperation of my delegation in the forthcoming discussions at this session.

Mr. Gwozdecky (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the Canadian delegation, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission and to assure you of our full support.

I also take this opportunity to greet the Chairmen of the Working Groups, who can also count on our confidence and cooperation.

Our session could not have come at a better time. At this time last year, the international community was extending the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) indefinitely and making the commitment to rid the planet of nuclear weapons. This commitment has since given rise to specific measures, certainly modest but sufficient to demonstrate the will of all the parties to the nuclear debate.

(*spoke in English*)

This year, progress will come in the form of a historic comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty, which we are on the brink of completing. The actions of some nuclear-weapon States, whether with respect to START II, their signing of the relevant Protocols of the Treaty of Rarotonga or the recent unilateral disarmament actions announced by France, have given us reason to applaud, to hope and to expect more. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction inches closer to entry into force. In the coming months, golden opportunities exist to do more, for example with respect to biological and toxin weapons. Indeed the agenda is full of opportunities for real progress in dealing with weapons of mass destruction.

But have we any equivalent cause for hope in terms of what we are doing about conventional weapons — the only weapons in fact currently in use, currently killing each hour of each day? One such conventional weapon, the anti-personnel landmine, has been aptly described as a "weapon of mass destruction in slow motion". As we speak, our colleagues in Geneva are attempting to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition or Restriction on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, to increase the restrictions on the use of these weapons. While we hope for a decisive and positive result at that meeting, it is not clear that there is yet the necessary collective determination to seize the moment and deal with these weapons in a manner which will ensure their elimination.

The weight of world opinion has turned decidedly against anti-personnel landmines. Increasingly, humanity is rejecting their legitimacy as weapons of war. More than a dozen countries have taken concrete action to ban their use, and there is every indication that by this time next year the numbers will have grown dramatically.

My delegation would like to encourage this body and the other bodies devoted to disarmament to take up the cause of conventional weapons, particularly the landmines issue, with renewed vigour. Excessive spending on conventional weapons and excessive build-ups of these weapons do more than kill; they fuel tensions, steal scarce resources and hinder good governance. We believe that the issue of conventional weapons is a legitimate and pressing item on our disarmament agenda.

(*spoke in French*)

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, has expressed the desire to see the question of conventional weapons firmly on the disarmament agenda. In a recent statement he called on us to promote assistance for effective development and to encourage countries to reduce their arms expenditures. In this respect, we are of the view that the Conference on Disarmament should resume its discussions on transparency in the sphere of arms, which would correspond to the wish expressed by the General Assembly, including in its annual call for extension and for joining the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and in its resolution on small-calibre weapons, which was adopted last year.

When we discuss the question of international arms transfers and the possible holding of a fourth special session devoted to disarmament, we should also consider how to make progress on the conventional-weapons agenda. The document on international arms transfers, which we will complete over the next two weeks, contains a set of concepts which can clarify our work on conventional weapons, both within the context of a fourth special session devoted to disarmament, and at the Conference on Disarmament.

(*spoke in English*)

So let's make it happen. The text has many good elements; it does not need major surgery. Two weeks of concentrated effort and a good dose of pragmatism, practicality and compromise should permit us to produce a useful document that will lay some intellectual foundation for our future efforts in dealing with the conventional arms challenge.

(*spoke in French*)

As regards the fourth special session devoted to disarmament, I believe that most of us hope that it will be successful once it is convened. To achieve this the ground must be well prepared and we must devote all our intellectual and diplomatic resources to it. In the short term, there is no doubt that these resources are almost wholly taken up by questions already on the agenda. The programme of work arising out of decisions relating to the NPT is enormous.

(*spoke in English*)

First and foremost, we must work to fulfil the important package of commitments we undertook at the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the NPT last May. Canada sees great value in a fourth special session devoted to disarmament, but perhaps in 1998 or 1999. This would enable us to take stock of the progress achieved in the disarmament agenda and explore the areas of priority for the future, for a new century. In addition to the important substantive work, we need to consider how we can improve the management of the disarmament agenda within the United Nations, particularly the role of the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and this body.

I have already taken too much time. My delegation is ready to go to work. We pledge to work with you, Sir, and to bring pragmatism and compromise to the table.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation congratulates you once more, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission. We wish also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We hope that you will be successful in conducting the business of this session of the Disarmament Commission. We promise you the full cooperation of my delegation.

We are pleased here to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, for his brilliant guidance of the work of the Commission last year.

The Disarmament Commission is holding the 1996 substantive session after a series of developments in the field of disarmament, prominent among them the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Our position as regards that Conference is well known, and the adoption of the Treaty of Pelindaba on an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. Such developments should have implications for the work of the Disarmament Commission, as the specialized deliberative body of the General Assembly in the field of disarmament. This body should be no less important than the Conference on Disarmament; it should complement its work.

It is with regret that we recall that last year the Disarmament Commission was not able to reach consensus on some of the items before it. We hope during this session to reach agreement on the items on our agenda.

In line with the principles and purposes of the United Nations, we wish to curb the excessive production, development and stockpiling of conventional weapons, while taking into account the legitimate and inalienable rights of States to self-determination and to resist foreign occupation. The States that possess the largest arsenals should work towards drastic reductions in the production and possession of conventional weapons, with a view to promoting international peace and security.

In 1978, the sincere efforts of the international community were crowned with success, when the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament was adopted. The lack of agreement at the second and third special sessions should not diminish the importance of holding a fourth. The positive changes that have taken place recently in the international arena have paved the way to holding a fourth special session to review the latest developments in the field of disarmament. We look forward to the convening of that session next year.

My country voted in favour of resolution 50/70 F, which was submitted by the non-aligned countries and which called for the convening of the special session in

1997. We believe that the special session will offer us an opportunity to review the most significant aspects of the disarmament process from a perspective reflecting the current international situation and to mobilize the international community and world public opinion in favour of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the control and reduction of conventional weapons.

My country attaches special importance to the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and hopes that the Commission will reach an agreement in this area. This is a universal necessity and the cornerstone of the objectives of disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. It would also constitute the first step towards eliminating the nuclear threat.

The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament provided for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones where they do not exist, taking into account the characteristics of each region, in full respect of the territorial integrity of each State. We are pleased here to welcome the Organization of African Unity's adoption, on 28 June 1995, of the final text of the Treaty of Pelindaba establishing the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which will complement the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga and the Antarctic Treaty. We hope that the Middle East will be the next region to establish such a zone.

In 1968, the Syrian Arab Republic was among the first States of the Middle East to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In 1989, it also called for the Middle East to become a zone free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction within the framework of United Nations efforts. However, Israel responded neither to this call nor to those made repeatedly by the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and summit conferences of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. As the only State in the Middle East to possess nuclear weapons and the only State that has not acceded to the NPT, Israel is the sole obstacle to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The Eleventh Conference of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held last year in Cartagena, reaffirmed its appeal to Israel to renounce the possession of nuclear weapons and to accede to the NPT, but Israel has persisted in its development and stockpiling of a nuclear arsenal. In view of the universal desire to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, my country cannot accept any Israeli excuse for refusing to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear installations under the full-scope safeguards of the IAEA. Israel should contribute in earnest to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Israel's statement before the First Committee during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly that the nuclear issue should not be addressed in isolation from the peace process is a purely dilatory tactic aimed at side-stepping the priority nuclear question. The peace process in the Middle East is ongoing. Security is attained by removing the threats to it. What justification can Israel have for possessing nuclear weapons while we are engaged in the peace process? The renunciation of nuclear weapons is the true way to safeguard peace and security.

If the international community represented here in the Disarmament Commission is serious about achieving productive results at this session, we expect Israel to be called upon to renounce the nuclear option, to take real and committed steps towards subjecting its nuclear installations to IAEA safeguards, and to accede to the NPT.

We would hope that the international community will see the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as being of primary importance and that, in the spirit of collective responsibility, it will undertake practical measures aimed at supporting this initiative, which would help bring about a world free from threat and danger, where aggression is renounced and peace is strong.

Mr. Sukayri (Jordan): At the outset, I should like to extend my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its 1996 substantive session. We are confident that, with your long experience in the field of disarmament as well as your distinguished diplomatic skills, you will be able to guide the deliberations of the Commission in the most skilful manner.

I should also like to express my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia for the exemplary manner in which he led the Commission's deliberations at the last session.

As a member of the Bureau, I should also like to congratulate my dear colleagues, the other members of the Bureau, on their election, and assure them all of my delegation's fullest cooperation.

My delegation shares the view of the overwhelming majority of member States in the great importance they attach to the work of the Disarmament Commission. As the only deliberative body of the United Nations with universal membership in the field of disarmament, the Commission is supposed to play an extremely important role in deliberating and recommending principles and guidelines on specific important disarmament issues. The failure of the Commission sometimes to carry out its mandate does not necessarily refer to any inherent defects in its status, but rather to the lack of sufficient time allocated for its substantive sessions and of consensus among member States on specific sensitive matters under consideration. Along the lines of the 1990 document on ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission, we urge member States to consider convening a special session of the Disarmament Commission devoted to a thorough study of ways and means necessary for the review, enhancement and improvement of the work of the Commission.

Given the fact that such a special Disarmament Commission session would be costly, and in view of the current unhealthy financial situation of the United Nations, an alternative option might be considered, to set up an ad hoc committee with a mandate to study ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

We regret, as other delegations do, the fact that during its 1995 substantive session, the United Nations Disarmament Commission was unable to reach agreement on two of its main agenda items. We hope that this year the Commission will be able to achieve concrete results.

With regard to the item dealing with international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991, my delegation believes that all ways and means should be considered for the eradication of illicit arms transfers. As such transfers are often associated with terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime, a coordinated multidisciplinary effort among Member States is badly needed. During this session, the Commission is supposed to conclude its deliberations on this item, and we find the elements included in last year's paper presented by the Chairman to be most constructive. They constitute a good basis for this year's deliberations. Hoping to reach an agreement on that basis, my delegation pledges full cooperation and support in this regard.

The new item, entitled "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament" (SSOD IV), is of great importance, especially at this juncture, five years after the end of the cold war and almost two decades after the most fruitful of the special sessions devoted to disarmament, namely the first. The proposed new special session also comes at a time when the whole agenda of disarmament and international security is being reshuffled in preparation for the next century. We attach great importance to the proposed session and call for its careful preparation, so that it can yield constructive results.

Therefore, it should be made clear on this occasion that the deliberations on this item that will take place in this forum do not constitute a substitute for the preparatory work. A Preparatory Committee must be convened as soon as possible, preferably by the end of this year or early next year, to avoid the pressure of time on the work of that Committee as the special session comes closer.

My delegation regrets that, after all these efforts in the last few months, we have not yet been able to reach consensus on a third substantive agenda item. We believe that the general question of nuclear-weapon-free zones is the best option, and as far as my delegation is concerned, we are willing to go along with any proposal within the scope of nuclear-weapon-free zones. This position is based on our deep conviction that nuclear-weapon-free zones, as a mechanism for regional nuclear non-proliferation, constitute a valuable component of global efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation and, eventually, nuclear disarmament.

In this sense, we believe that the recent signing of treaties on two nuclear-weapon-free zones, in Africa and in South-East Asia, has been one of the most significant, positive developments in the field of international security and disarmament in the last year. We hope that the States of the Middle East will be able to establish their own nuclear-weapon-free zone, a step that will undoubtedly enhance the ongoing peace process in the region and will also have a positive impact on global peace and security. In this regard, allow me here to remind all Disarmament Commission members of General Assembly resolutions adopted since 1974, the latest of which is resolution 50/66 of 12 December 1995, calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

Allow me also to remind the nuclear-weapon States in particular of their responsibilities in accordance with operative paragraph 6 of the resolution on the Middle East (NPT/CONF.1995/32) adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which calls upon them

> "to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems."

Again, Mr. Chairman, we are looking forward to a fruitful and most constructive discussion under your guidance during this session, and we pledge our support and cooperation.

Mr. Salazar-Monroe (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We are pleased that you are with us once again, Sir, this time as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. We welcome your election and that of your fellow members of the Bureau. Through you, I wish to extend my gratitude to Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia for the work he did throughout the deliberations of this Commission last year.

The delegation of Peru will not be referring to anything new. However, as we start this statement, I should like to hail the Pelindaba Treaty, which was signed on 11 April last in Cairo. This agreement brings us significantly closer to an important common aspiration of humankind: the wish to rid the world of the threat of nuclear weapons and, in general, of weapons of mass destruction. I pay tribute first of all to the States parties to the Treaty, but also to those uclear-weapon States that have signed the relevant Protocols to the Pelindaba Treaty. I am not speaking on behalf of the members of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, but I do believe that I can express what is the common wish of all of us: establishing contacts and developing a close cooperation with the Pelindaba Treaty, along lines similar to the cooperation that has already begun with the Rarotonga Treaty.

I was saying that I will not be bringing up any new events, because our current problems are quite enough. On the one hand, the Commission is beset by its past, particularly the successive failures of 1994 and 1995, as a result of which we are not in a position to say that the mandate for which the Commission was established has yet been complied with, and on the other hand because this critical evaluation of the Commission comes at the same time as steps to reform the Organization and specific proposals for this Commission.

It appears to us that the Commission has yet to comply with the mandate for which it was established: to contribute substantially to the search for worldwide disarmament. At the same time, it faces the new challenge of proposing to the international community a comprehensive programme of disarmament for the post-cold-war period.

The Commission's problem has several dimensions. Aside from the strictly functional and organizational ones, it seems to us that the main problem lies in the lack of political will to continue multilateral efforts in support of disarmament in all its aspects.

I have referred, as have most of the delegations that spoke before me, to our experiences in 1994 and 1995. In so doing, my intention was to stress that we must prevent this from happening again. The proposed agenda items are of particular interest to Peru. Without being repetitive, I wish to reiterate, for instance, Peru's interest not only in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones but also in the cooperation that should be established among such zones. The representatives of Peru, at the Review and Extension Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and at last year's session of the Commission, described this possibility in visionary terms in referring to the establishment of an entire nuclear-weapon-free hemisphere.

Similarly, just as the mandate of the Commission is at present taking on renewed relevance, it seems to us that once the bipolar confrontation has ended, the international community as a whole should agree on specific measures to promote disarmament. The proposed special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament quite justifiably has an important agenda. Just as important is the groundwork for the conference: we must state as specifically as possible the concrete results expected of it. I do not think that we should be hasty. Preparatory work for the new special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is no less critical than the participation of the entire international community, lest we risk achieving only results that are frustrating or unsatisfactory or that cannot be implemented.

Peru, of course, attaches the special importance it deserves to the question of non-proliferation in all its aspects. It has voiced firm support for the indefinite extension of the NPT and will continue to support this multilateral regime. However, Peru has also drawn this Commission's attention to the danger posed for most developing countries by the trend to reduce the multilateral disarmament and security agenda to the nuclear issue exclusively. For most developing countries, it is increasingly evident that there is an urgent need to make simultaneous headway on conventional disarmament, for the simple reason that conventional weapons are the ones continuously used in the conflicts among and within our countries.

Peru has denounced the unjustified buildup of conventional weapons and the existence of covert processes of such conventional weapons build-ups, which give rise to instability and insecurity. These cases, in our view, should be brought appropriately to the international community's attention for consideration so that they can be curbed and reversed in favour of peace and development.

We hope that this year the Commission will be able to complete its elaboration of guidelines for international arms transfers, in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991. This is not an easy task. It would involve effective, non-selective verification and control mechanisms.

I would highlight in particular the value of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Peru believes that this needs to be urgently updated so as to include information on national stockpiles of conventional weapons, on procurement on the domestic market, and on additional categories of weapons. Peru has also maintained that the control of international arms transfers requires cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, which is not currently the case.

The problem is even greater, of course, when we speak in terms of the illicit arms trade, because we are then referring to a criminal activity that all States need to tackle at the national level as well as through international cooperation.

The Chairman: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

I draw the Commission's attention to the following decision of the General Assembly:

> "The number of interventions in the exercise of the right reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item.
>
> "The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention should be limited to five minutes." *(decision 34/401, paras. 9-10)*

I sincerely hope that in view of the time we have left, statements will be even shorter.

Mr. Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The South Korean representative said that his Government regretted that the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula has not been implemented. This polite statement implies that the Declaration could not be implemented because of my country. My statement is not to respond to the South Korean representative, but rather to tell our side's story — to give a clear picture of the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula.

We proposed to turn the Korean Peninsula into a nuclear-free zone in the 1970s, and requested recognition from neighbouring nuclear States. But our initiative was rejected by the other side.

At the same time, we have learned valuable lessons in dealing with security matters on the Korean peninsula during the past 40 years, *inter alia*, that we cannot settle any security issue with South Korea. Although the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula has been adopted between North and South Korea, it is meaningless as long as United States nuclear weapons are excluded, because South Korea has asked to be under the nuclear umbrella of the United States. As a result, Korea has no say at all on the nuclear weapons deployed in South Korea.

This shows that, as concerns the implementation of the North-South Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the nuclear issue should be settled primarily between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States.

As for the implementation of the Declaration, there will be no difficulties once the agreed framework between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States is implemented. In fact, we have already fulfilled all the core provisions of the joint

denuclearization Declaration through the implementation of the relevant provisions of the agreed framework between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States.

Mr. Hahm (Republic of Korea): I do not like to be involved in exchanges of rights of reply of this kind. However, I feel compelled to make a brief remark in connection with the statement just made by my colleague from North Korea, which my delegation considers to have been totally out of context.

In my statement earlier, I emphasized the importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as one of the most effective means in a global non-proliferation regime. In this regard, I mentioned the adoption by the two Koreas in December 1991 of the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

It is well known to the international community that the Joint Declaration has not yet been implemented because of North Korea's obstructionist attitude. I should like to tell this Commission that the Government of the Republic of Korea is fully prepared to implement the Joint Declaration.

I should also like to take this opportunity to urge North Korea to engage without delay in a bilateral dialogue with the Republic of Korea for the implementation of the historic Joint Declaration.

Mr. Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Once again, I should like to emphasize that we cannot settle any security matters with the South Korean authorities, which have no prerogatives over their military and no say at all over the nuclear weapons deployed by the United States in South Korea. As the South Koreans have no say or qualifications whatsoever, and at the same time enjoy the United States nuclear umbrella, it is meaningless to talk about denuclearization with South Korea while excluding the United States.

It is our position that we should first primarily settle this matter with the United States. If this is done, then there will be no obstacle to settling the Joint Declaration on denuclearization between our North and South.

The Chairman: This concludes our general exchange of views.

Organizational matters

The Chairman: I want to remind representatives that, as of this afternoon, we will enter the true working mode and have the Working Groups running.

Mr. Rivero Rosario (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Since this is the first time that my delegation is speaking, we wish to join in extending our congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship and to express our gratitude to last year's Chairman, Ambassador Erdenechuluun, for his work. We also congratulate the Vice-Chairmen, the Rapporteur and the Chairmen of the two Working Groups established to date.

I am speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, of which my delegation is the current Chairman. After extensive and appropriate consultations, I wish on behalf of that Group to nominate Nicaragua to the vacant vice-chairmanship of the Commission. We hope that the Commission will accept the nomination.

The Chairman: This is welcome news. The Latin American and Caribbean Group proposes Nicaragua as a Vice-Chairman for this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. May I take it that this is agreeable to the Commission?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I congratulate the delegation of Nicaragua.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): As members know, the President of Lebanon, Mr. Elias Hraoui, will be addressing the General Assembly this afternoon on the serious situation in his country. Considering the importance of this issue, we would ask you, Sir, to delay this afternoon's meetings until 4.30 p.m. The delay might also give us the opportunity to hold further consultations on a third substantive item, on which we have yet to agree.

The Chairman: I wonder whether it is possible to hold consultations and listen to a speech at the same time. While, of course, we recognize the importance of the President of Lebanon's statement to the General Assembly and everybody is free to attend, I will not reschedule the meetings of this Commission; we are a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and I do not think that we can simply cancel our meetings.

Representatives must recognize that we have very little time this year anyway, so I would hesitate to close down meetings for any reason.

I think that everybody should feel free to attend those meetings that they feel it necessary to attend, but there will be an opportunity this afternoon to take part in the work of the Working Groups of this Commission.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to support the proposal made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. I do not think that an hour's delay would greatly affect the efficiency of our work this afternoon.

I also wish to inform the Commission that the African Group is pursuing its consultations and will nominate a candidate for a vice-chairmanship by tomorrow morning, at the latest.

Mr. Rivasseau (France) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to associate France with the statements of Algeria and Syria. I wish to draw the Commission's attention to the worldwide importance of the statement to be made this afternoon and to request at least an hour's delay in this afternoon's work.

The French delegation is of course able to attend both meetings, but we must consider those that are represented by only one political officer and must choose between the two events. With this in mind, and given the fact that the Disarmament Commission is the only truly universal deliberative body outside the General Assembly that deals with disarmament, I would kindly ask you, Sir, to grant the request that has just been made. I feel that the Disarmament Commission would do itself proud by displaying a little flexibility, on the understanding, of course, that this should not set a precedent.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt): I would just add my voice to those of previous speakers. It has in fact been a tradition of courtesy that, when a Head of State comes to speak before the General Assembly, other subsidiary organs usually tend to allow some time for members to attend such a meeting. This was the case when the President of Italy was here a few weeks ago and when the Foreign Minister of Cuba was here to address the General Assembly. We hope that this case will be treated the same way, so as to allow those delegations that cannot attend more than two or three meetings at the same time to be present, particularly given the profound effects of that serious situation in the Middle East on our work in other forums.

Mr. Fridegotto (Italy): I should also like to join previous speakers in supporting the proposal made by Syria and to observe that there is a well-known tradition in this respect that we would like to follow.

Mr. Rivero Rosario (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation understands that this afternoon's meeting of the General Assembly is taking place at the behest of the Group of Arab States and that we all recognize the importance of the issues to be addressed. We endorse the usual practice of acceding to such requests and cannot but support most warmly the request that you, Sir, demonstrate flexibility by convening this afternoon's meetings at 4 p.m.

The Chairman: All right, then. I am wax in your hands, of course. We will meet in working-group mode this afternoon at 4 p.m. United Nations time, which in practical terms means 4.30 p.m. But please do not make it 5 p.m., because otherwise we might as well cancel the whole thing for this afternoon, which would be inconvenient for the results we want to achieve during these two weeks.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I wish to thank most sincerely those representatives who supported my proposal. I believe that such a proposal would be accepted in any similar circumstances.

The Chairman: So everybody is happy, I suppose. I have one other question to put to the Commission this morning that comes out of yesterday's deliberations: Does any representative wish to propose a third substantive agenda item on which we can all agree? If members so desire, I propose to go into informal session to discuss this immediately following the adjournment of the present meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.203

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

203rd Meeting
Wednesday, 24 April 1996, 5 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Hoffmann . . . . . (Germany)

The meeting was called to order at 5.20 p.m.

Organizational matters

The Chairman: I am happy to announce that I have received a note verbale from Uganda, nominating the Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania as a Vice-Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for 1996.

May I take it that the Disarmament Commission elects by acclamation the Permanent Representative of Tanzania as a Vice-Chairman of the Commission for 1996?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I congratulate the delegation of Tanzania.

We still have the problem of a third substantive agenda item. The question is whether we can agree right away that we have a problem there, or whether we should have another round of informal meetings. Does any one want to have an informal meeting? That seems not to be the case.

It has become clear from my conversations with various delegations that we are not going to be able this year to agree on a third item, because we could not find a formulation on nuclear-weapon-free zones that would be agreeable to everybody. Therefore, I conclude that this year we cannot do other than to work on two items. That will not be a precedent for the coming years, of course; we will endeavour to find three items for next year. In this connection, I would also like to point out that we will not diminish the time slot that is available for the Disarmament Commission. We will go back next year to the normal time of three weeks and one day, from which we were obliged to deviate this year and last, when we were in an emergency situation.

On Friday morning I will discuss with the Bureau how to bring this about. I think what we should be doing is having a look at ideas that were brought forward during the general debate and collect a provisional list of agenda items with a view to avoiding last-ditch, last-minute efforts to come to terms with our subject-matter. We will probably come back to this next week.

I propose now that the Commission adopt the provisional agenda (A/CN.10/L.38) in a slightly modified form, omitting item 5 and renumbering the following items accordingly. May I take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the provisional agenda, as orally revised?

The provisional agenda, as orally revised, was adopted.

The Chairman: This means that we will also renumber the working groups. Working Group I will be on international arms transfers, and Working Group II will be on the exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. This will be reflected on next week's calendar.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Once again, I thank you, Sir, for your tireless efforts to try to reconcile the various

96-85568 (E)

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viewpoints on the complicated question of a third substantive agenda item. We can only express our profound regret that we have not managed to reach an agreement on this item.

The item that had been under consideration was viewed favourably by the majority, but has not been accepted owing to the opposition of one delegation. We cannot accept the elimination of the third substantive agenda item unless the delegation which opposed its inclusion explains its reasons, and provided that we decide on this item when we meet next year. We should avoid further confrontations in the future.

We would like to know now that this agenda item will be considered next year.

The Chairman: We all know that our difficulties stem from the position of one delegation, which is not present at the moment and which therefore cannot give the explanations that the representative of Syria has asked for.

However, while it is true that we are working under the rules of the General Assembly, it is also true that, customarily, the Disarmament Commission does not take votes. This means we have always taken decisions on a consensus basis and I intend to keep it that way. Therefore, we have no alternative but to drop the third item this year. Next year, of course, will be a new ball game, and I am sure that there will be new proposals that will also include this item. We will certainly work on it.

Mr. Rivasseau (France) (*interpretation from French*): Obviously, France also regrets that the third substantive item cannot be included on the agenda. We are not particularly requesting consideration of that subject; it is just that we feel that it would have been useful for the disarmament community and for all States interested in this concept to be able to exchange their experiences.

I think, as our colleague from Syria said and as you yourself mentioned, Mr. Chairman, we must draw lessons from what has happened this year. We must try to deal with it even earlier than we did this year. I think that it would actually be good to separate ourselves from the issue during this session of the Disarmament Commission on the common understanding that that issue would be a useful topic for next year. I think, as the delegation referred to is not represented here, we can decide on this item without being opposed.

The Chairman: We have taken our decision. I do not want to prolong this; I imagine that members are on speaking terms with each other and can get all the explanations that they want bilaterally.

Mr. Hosny (Egypt): Allow me to add my voice to those of my colleagues from Syria and from France. Allow me, first of all, Sir, to thank you for all your efforts to make this work; but, unfortunately, it has not.

We would like to express our deep regret and disappointment that, due to the fact that a few delegations blocked consensus on the inclusion of a nuclear item for this year, we are not able to include one.

We would also like to say that my delegation and other delegations attach great importance to such an item. We hope that during its next session the Disarmament Commission will tackle it effectively, without facing the same problems we faced this year. As another delegation has said, if there is a specific reason why we should not open this matter, the delegation concerned should come forward and speak clearly and openly, and explain the reason for the situation that we now find ourselves in.

My delegation too would like to have some sort of a gentlemen's agreement that next year we will handle this item appropriately.

The Chairman: The key word is "appropriately". I am sure we will all make strenuous efforts to come to a common solution.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): First of all, allow my delegation to thank you, Sir, for the tireless efforts you have made regarding the inclusion of a third item. As members know my delegation has done and tried everything in the group and in the Commission to achieve a consensus formula on this item. It was not possible, owing to the need for unanimous consensus, if members will allow that expression. We regret that; however, the Disarmament Commission should not have lost the benefit of a third item, devoted to nuclear issues.

I would also like to go back somewhat to a very attractive proposal which was made by the Mexican delegation during the general exchange of views, for compiling a list of alternative issues which could possibly help us if we do not find an agreement regarding some kind of wording for this matter.

The Chairman: That was exactly what I had in mind when I said that we should take some time next week to discuss the way forward. I will take this up with the Bureau, as I said, at our Friday meeting.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I apologize for speaking once again, but we would like to hear the delegation of India state its view on the inclusion of this item on next year's agenda. We would also like the report we are to adopt at the end of our session to include this issue. We need to decide on this question of principle now so that it can be included in the record.

The Chairman: It would be very optimistic to think that we can decide on wording for next year's item at our meeting today.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I was not suggesting that; we are not in a position to determine the actual wording. If we could, however, leave this meeting with some understanding, that would mean that this issue could be included on next year's agenda without opposition.

The Chairman: I am still slightly puzzled, I must say, because if we take a decision now, the only thing we can do is to say that we will endeavour to include it on next year's agenda. If we run into the same difficulties that we have now, I do not see any way forward.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I would merely like to hear the views of India on the formulation of this question.

Mr. Kumar (India): I am flattered that our views, which are well known, are being sought. The Indian delegation would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your tireless efforts to find a solution to this issue. As far as the Indian delegation is concerned, we agreed to the suggestion you made last Friday on the topic of the "role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the context of global efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament"; we agreed to it, and we can go along with it, provided other delegations can go along with it as well.

That in short is our position. I think the Syrian delegation will understand this very clearly.

Mr. Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): We hope that it will become the understanding of this session of the Disarmament Commission that there is overwhelming support for a discussion of the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Our consultations over the past six months have proved that there is indeed overwhelming support for discussion of this matter in the Commission.

Because of certain problems, including finding an appropriate formulation, we could not discuss it this year. However, we hope that this will be possible through continued consultations between now and December, when there will be another organizational session of the Disarmament Commission.

Since there is a possibility that we might conclude the item on international arms transfers, as well as the one on a fourth special session on disarmament, we could next year have the difficult task of finding three items. I think one good candidate is the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones. I think we should capture the sense of our consultations of the past several months and try to find an appropriate formulation that is acceptable to everyone.

The Chairman: It is not only an understanding but a plain fact, and a very apparent one, that there is overwhelming support for an item on nuclear-weapon-free zones. As the representative of Iran stated, we will endeavour to carry this forward.

Mr. Hanif (Pakistan): I wish to thank you, Sir, for your tireless efforts and for your patience in delaying your decision, which you have finally hammered into our heads, that we cannot have a third item on the agenda this year. My delegation is deeply disappointed that because of certain delegations the entire United Nations membership has been deprived of the opportunity to discuss an important item, a topic that all of us want to discuss. Because of this decision, we have a problem for the 1997 session: we shall have to decide on three new agenda items, which will be a difficult task, considering our experience of the last two years.

Accordingly, I share the view expressed by the delegations of Egypt, France, Iran and Syria that our discussions on next year's agenda items should start now and continue until December, and that we should endeavour to have some topic related to nuclear-weapon-free zones on the agenda in 1997. This is because there are countries that profess that nuclear disarmament should be pursued in a time-bound framework, but that are not willing to discuss measures at the regional level to start such a process. We feel that this item should remain on

the agenda and that an endeavour should be made to achieve consensus on this topic.

Mr. Sorreta (Philippines): I should like to thank you, Sir, for your tireless efforts in seeking a solution to this problem. Your efforts have always been accompanied by a great sense of friendship and humour, and this has been essential.

The Philippines wishes to express its disappointment at the situation we face, in which, though so many developments in the area of nuclear-weapon-free zones have come to a head, the item has now been pushed from our agenda to next year's — a year that might possibly be a very busy one, with the possibility of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and several other things.

Today, perhaps, we have seen how powerful a veto can actually be. Hopefully, we can come up with a formulation that can reflect the sentiment of the overwhelming majority here. We should also be able to reflect in our decisions that the agenda item should be included next year. I understand that we cannot dictate it at this point; we are in your hands, Mr. Chairman, when it comes to how to formulate this.

The Chairman: It will be a nice task for the Rapporteur to formulate our discussions on this subject.

Mr. González Bustos (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation, like others that have spoken before me, deeply regrets the fact that it has not been possible to include a third substantive item on our agenda for this year. We think that this would have been useful and important to strengthen the Disarmament Commission, especially as it deals with the nuclear issue and, more specifically, nuclear-weapon-free zones, which, as members are aware, are of particular importance to my country.

I believe that every effort was made; yet it was not possible to achieve consensus. We regret this situation, but given this fact, I believe that we should adopt measures during this session of the Commission to create some mechanism, as we suggested in our statement during the general exchange of views, to avoid a recurrence of this situation. I think that if we could use a bit of the time that we would in theory have allotted to Working Group III to try to find a solution, we should be able to make considerable headway on this. And taking advantage of the presence of the many delegations here, it would enable us to look into the possibility of preparing the lists of items that we had mentioned earlier, and that could be dealt with at a special meeting of the Disarmament Commission later on. They could be negotiated so as to establish a mechanism that would allow us to have available items on each of the issues covered by the Disarmament Commission, at least for the next five years.

The Chairman: We will consider that proposal.

Mr. García (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First of all, Sir, like the colleagues who have spoken before me, I wish to thank you for your efforts to find agreement on a third substantive item for the agenda of the Disarmament Commission. It is regrettable that after the tremendous efforts made over several months, we have not been able to reach agreement on a third item. This highlights the need, which several other delegations have mentioned, to have beforehand a list of possible items that could be considered, studied and analysed by the Commission during its substantive sessions. This is a proposal that is worth taking into account and supporting so as to prevent similar situations from arising in the future.

Colombia is convinced of the need for such a list and of the need to include on it issues on which, at least in principle, agreement could be reached within the Commission. We do not think that we would be doing the Commission a great service if we were to select items that would not be agreed on after two, three, four, even five years of work, because that would be the best way to weaken the Commission. The Commission must obtain results. All of us here, all of us who have been participating in its work, have been doing so constructively, and I believe that neither our Governments nor our Ministers of Foreign Affairs would be satisfied if after five or even three years of work, the Commission had no results to show. The best way to strengthen the Commission is to produce results, and I think that that is the commitment that all of us involved in this process should undertake.

Programme of work

The Chairman: As concerns our schedule for this week, I would suggest that on Thursday morning we drop the meeting that would have been devoted to item 5. I will try to rearrange the schedule in such a way that Working Group II on SSOD IV can take over this slot on

Friday morning, but I will have to discuss this with Ambassador Erdenechuluun.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): When arranging the programme for the two Working Groups, will it be possible to avoid overlapping between the two Working Groups? We would appreciate that, but hope that it will not create delays.

The Chairman: That would mean that we had to cancel the Working Group on SSOD IV as well, and work exclusively on Working Group I. And, as we do not want to do this, I am afraid that there will be overlaps all the time. This is what we had decided upon, but tomorrow, for instance, there will be fewer overlaps.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.204

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

204th Meeting
Tuesday, 30 April 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Hoffmann . . . . . (Germany)

The meeting was called to order 10.30 a.m.

Programme of work

The Chairman: Last Friday morning, the expanded Bureau approved the working timetable for the period 29 April to 7 May, which has been circulated to representatives. In this connection, it should be noted that, in response to the request of a large number of delegations, two informal, private meetings of the Committee of the Whole have been scheduled this week for the purpose of discussing appropriate mechanisms for selecting future agenda items for the Disarmament Commission.

Reports by Chairmen of Working Groups

The Chairman: I call on the Chairman of Working Group I.

Mr. Chirila (Romania), Chairman of Working Group I (*interpretation from French*): It is quite easy to talk about things that are working reasonably well. I can report that, in Working Group I, a true spirit of cooperation prevailed throughout our meetings last week. We put the available time and facilities to maximum use. We reviewed last year's Chairman's text, to which you yourself, Sir, made a fundamental and personal contribution.

We were able to review approximately 80 per cent of the text at our first reading. We have eliminated brackets and merged elements in important areas of the text. For instance, I would inform members that we have combined the introduction and definitions into a consolidated chapter. We have also combined chapters II and VII on the role of the United Nations. We consolidated the chapter on ways and means. We have also done considerable technical work to combine or move texts that generally resemble one another.

These are some of the important tasks accomplished by the members of the Working Group. I am convinced that the readiness of Commission members to work on technical matters will be accompanied by a desire to work on political matters as well. I hope that this augurs well for the coming week's work.

As I have already said, we reviewed the introduction, which has been consolidated with the chapter on definitions, and the chapters on scope and on ways and means. The chapter on institutional arrangements is broken down into two parts, one on the United Nations and the second on other institutional arrangements. The chapter on principles remains to be addressed, and I would venture to say that it will cause no serious problems because, in my own personal view and those of my colleagues, the chapters — particularly that on ways and means — are very carefully drafted. We are here above all to define ways and means for cooperation among States towards achieving some progress on this very sensitive issue.

From a practical standpoint, we are deeply aware of the fact that this is the last year for considering the text. We have cause for optimism, but we should not venture too far into ideas that cannot enjoy consensus. I hope that the spirit of cooperation that has prevailed in Working Group I's work will continue to do so and that it will

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give us the satisfaction of furnishing a text that will be of use to the General Assembly.

I wish to mention a matter that I consider to be of great importance. We have talked enough at the expert level, I think, about international arms transfers and illicit arms trafficking. We must pass this package of ideas at the political level to the General Assembly, which would be in everyone's interest.

I would also point out that we have worked to standardize terminology. For instance, a consensus was reached on the disputed term "illicit arms trafficking", for which a number of other expressions had been used previously. "Illicit arms trafficking" is now the terminological standard used throughout all the texts.

We have also reflected the hope that the international Register of arms transfers will be further developed. There is a collective desire within the Group to combine the general aspects of international arms transfers with the more specific aspect of illicit arms trafficking. I hope that this will be reflected in the document.

We are determined to optimize our use of available time and facilities to achieve results. Today, we hope to conclude our first reading of the entire text. We may have to do further work on certain more sensitive issues in order to finish the text in time for a second reading by Thursday.

The Chairman: I think that Mr. Chirila is right to stress that this is our last year and am very encouraged that his Group is on the way to success.

I now call on the Chairman of Working Group II.

Mr. Erdenechuluun (Mongolia), Chairman of Working Group II: It is my pleasure to report that Working Group II began the consideration of agenda item 5, entitled "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament", on Thursday, 23 April. Working Group II devoted three meetings to a general exchange of views on the item.

I believe that the Working Group had very useful deliberations on the subject-matter. A number of delegations addressed the Working Group and presented concrete ideas and suggestions on the issue for consideration.

On Friday, 26 April, the Working Group embarked on a more focused and substantive discussion of the item. In addition to a number of proposals and suggestions that I referred to earlier, the Working Group has before it a working paper submitted by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement in the Commission for its consideration.

The Working Group will continue the examination of those proposals and ideas, as well as any other papers that might be submitted for its consideration. The Group will endeavour to benefit to the maximum from the limited time at its disposal in order to meet the expectations of the Disarmament Commission.

In conclusion, I should like to take this opportunity to thank all delegations participating in the deliberations of Working Group II for their spirit of cooperation, which I hope will continue in the coming days.

The Chairman: I am sure that all delegations will follow Mr. Erdenechuluun's advice. We are taking this subject very seriously and, of course, want to reach understandings in this field.

General exchange of views (*continued*)

Mr. Erdös (Hungary): Let me congratulate you somewhat belatedly, Sir, on your able chairmanship of the 1996 session of the Disarmament Commission. I also want to express my confidence that, under your effective leadership, the deliberations will continue to be steered towards the best achievable results, as was reflected in the reports of the Chairmen of the two Working Groups of the Commission.

I also wish to express my gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, for the way he guided the Commission's work last year.

Hungary, as a country associated with the European Union, joined in the statement presented on the first day of the general exchange of views by the Italian delegation on behalf of the Union. However, we would like to make some brief additional comments on the activities and agenda of this important body.

The Disarmament Commission has to date been a valuable component of the multilateral disarmament machinery, and it should continue to serve as a useful United Nations think-tank on global disarmament matters, although its actual achievements have more than once fallen behind our expectations. Today we wish to

register, as many others have done before us, our deep regret that, in spite of the wishes of the overwhelming majority of member States, the Commission could not reach a consensus on one of the substantive items originally envisaged for its agenda. We are convinced that the proposal to address the principles and guidelines on nuclear-weapon-free zones was a constructive and forward-looking initiative, and we can only hope that the failure to include it in our agenda this year will not serve as a precedent for the future activities of this body.

It remains our firm conviction that the regional approach, such as that relating to the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, has its own role and its own significance, and can also have a beneficial effect on progress in other fields of disarmament activity. Global and regional approaches to disarmament complement each other in the nuclear context, and should be carried out parallel to each other. We are sure that there is common ground and a shared interest in moving forward at both levels. We must also be aware that our efforts should be targeted at achievable and practical results — keeping the ultimate objectives in mind — without creating situations in which some issues inevitably become hostage to others, to the detriment of the whole process.

Since the end of the cold war there have been several examples of important and tangible progress towards the solution of complex issues of disarmament in a variety of bilateral, regional and global settings. Other speakers have referred to many of these achievements. The two major nuclear-weapon States have reached agreements on several significant bilateral treaties, including the INF and START II Treaties. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), as well as a set of confidence and security-building measures, have already proved useful instruments for conventional disarmament and stability in Europe. The establishment of new regimes by the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Pelindaba, the new signatures on the Rarotonga Treaty, and coordinated efforts to enhance security and stability in the Asian region are among the latest of these positive developments on a regional scale. Above all, the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons has undoubtedly created a major legal instrument — a basic guarantee for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons — which will benefit the entire international community.

Despite all this progress, international peace and security have not yet found a safe and satisfying berth. The long-standing bipolar nuclear confrontation has been replaced by mostly regional, subregional and intra-State conflicts arising from political, economic and social difficulties, and by massive violations of human rights, including those of ethnic minorities. Further progress is needed, and without undue delay.

It is reassuring to know that the prospects for new and significant achievements in disarmament are far from bleak. We have a more solid basis today for hoping and expecting that the comprehensive test-ban treaty will be finalized soon, and that it will be quickly followed up by the conclusion of a universal, non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable cut-off treaty, by the entry into force and implementation of the chemical weapons Convention, and by new measures for strengthening verification and transparency in arms control and disarmament across the board.

In our opinion, the road to major successes in these and many other areas of multilateral disarmament leads through a series of realistic, well-defined, consistent and target-oriented steps. In this context we believe that the idea of a new special disarmament session of the General Assembly (SSOD) could prove useful. We support the view that, before making any decisions on the timing of a new SSOD, thorough preparatory work is needed, and clear prospects for a meaningful outcome should be established, and clear-cut and substantive objectives formulated. In order to derive the maximum benefit from such an ambitious future event, we believe that we must carefully analyse the performance of the international community in the field of disarmament since SSOD I took place in 1978. We believe that, after having established such groundwork, a new SSOD could indeed provide us with a good opportunity to devise a fresh and promising disarmament agenda for the future.

With regard to the other issue being discussed by the Disarmament Commission during its current session, Hungary shares the view that illicit arms transfers have become one of the greatest potential dangers to international security. We believe that on the basis of a broader submission of full returns to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, greater transparency could be achieved in the licit transfer of armaments, which, in turn, would create an atmosphere more conducive to reduction in illicit arms transfers. We trust that future joint efforts will also lead to the creation of regional registers, and believe that the Wassenaar arrangement, among other measures, might serve as a catalyst to this end. We would also like to encourage Member States to take more decisive steps to improve and harmonize their procedures for national legislation in

the sphere of arms transfers, in order to better prevent illicit arms transfers.

Without questioning the legitimate right of every State to self-defence, we must note that, in the case of regional conflicts, the unconstrained accumulation of conventional weapons can, and unfortunately does, lead to especially grave consequences. My delegation, therefore, again welcomes all regional disarmament efforts, such as that taking place in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

In conclusion, it is our sincere hope that the work on guidelines and principles for international arms transfers will be successfully concluded and a final document adopted by consensus at the end of this session.

Organizational matters

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Commission.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Disarmament Commission): I have been informed by the Chief of the Planning and Meetings Servicing Section of the Office of Conference and Support Services about the tentative dates for the 1997 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. In order to be able to make recommendations to the Committee on Conferences for consideration in August, the Office of Conference and Support Services has proposed the dates of 14 April to 12 May 1997 — the same four-week period reserved in previous years.

Of course, the exact dates and duration will be decided by the Disarmament Commission at its organizational session in December 1996. Accordingly, members of the Disarmament Commission may wish to endorse these tentative dates at this stage for the planning purposes of the Secretariat.

The Chairman: The meaning of that is we have to take a decision on a tentative schedule, within which we can then decide when exactly to hold our session. The forward planning means that rooms, Secretariat staff and interpreters will at least be planned on for a certain period of time.

Both 14 April and 12 May 1997 fall on Mondays. At one of the sessions that we usually have between our substantive sessions, we can decide on the actual time that we want to have; but this is enough time to give us the three weeks and one day that we normally have. Therefore, if members agree, we will give the Secretariat the green light for this tentative planning.

Sir Michael Weston (United Kingdom): I wonder if before taking that decision, we could have a little time to reflect on those dates. There are other important meetings that we need to fit in at that time of year, including, of course, one that is important to nearly all of us: the non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) preparatory committee.

The NPT depositories are in touch with the Secretariat about that, but the particular dates which Mr. Lin has just referred to would, I think, possibly cause problems for us, inasmuch as they would probably mean that we would have to have the NPT meeting straddling Easter, which I think would be unpopular with quite a number of delegations. I wonder if we might come back to this issue at our next plenary meeting, after we have had a chance to talk further to the Secretariat.

The Chairman: My little problem is, of course, that our next plenary meeting is scheduled for 7 May 1996, a time when most representatives from Geneva will not be here any more. Would it then be in order, to make it possible for them to participate, to take a decision on this at Thursday's meeting of the Committee of the Whole?

Sir Michael Weston (United Kingdom): That, or indeed the meeting of the Committee of the Whole tomorrow, would certainly be all right for me.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt): I would like, first of all, to thank the Centre for Disarmament Affairs for its early and swift preparations for next year, which should not lead us to a situation similar to this year's, where we were haggling over what dates to accept.

I understand that the preparations are based also on the same understanding: that we will have two rooms with two teams of interpreters. With that in mind, I am certain that the situation just described by the representative of the United Kingdom should be borne in mind; we should try to avoid having an overlap between the NPT meeting and our session.

The Chairman: That overlap should be avoided. I think it can be avoided, because the time set aside is more than four weeks. Normally we meet for three weeks and one day, so we can either introduce the NPT issue at the beginning or at the end — I see the

representative of the United Kingdom nodding. I suppose we will settle this and take a more formal decision tomorrow, if possible, in the Committee of the Whole.

I call on the Secretary of the Commission.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Disarmament Commission): The Commission could discuss these questions in the Committee of the Whole, as that body holds informal meetings and can take informal decisions which could be formalized on Tuesday, 7 May 1996, at the plenary meeting.

The Chairman: That is a perfect idea.

Mr. Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Like previous speakers, I want to support and welcome the proposal made by the Secretariat on the tentative schedule of the Disarmament Commission for next year.

I would like to put on record our position of principle on this matter. We attach great importance to the Disarmament Commission and to its substantive sessions. We are of the view that meetings of non-proliferation Treaty bodies, or any other disarmament-related meetings, should not disturb the dates of the substantive sessions of the Disarmament Commission, which is a regular session. The Secretariat, as well as States, should try to respect the schedule of meetings of this body. Perhaps we should try to accommodate meetings of States parties to various disarmament treaties in ways that do not create any problems for the Disarmament Commission.

The Chairman: Yes, that is our understanding. I suppose that it would be wise to hold both meetings back to back here in New York so that people do not have to go back and forth all the time.

The next plenary meeting of the Disarmament Commission will take place on Tuesday, 7 May. The Committee of the Whole will meet that morning at 10 a.m., to be followed by the plenary meeting, which could take place at 11 a.m. The main objective will be to consider and adopt the report of the Disarmament Commission as well as to hear concluding statements by delegations.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.205

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

205th Meeting
Friday, 3 May 1996, 12 noon
New York

Chairman: Mr. Hoffmann . . . . . (Germany)

The meeting was called to order at 12.05 p.m.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: As we approach the end of the session, the two Working Groups have been working intensively on their respective subjects over the past week. Currently, Working Group I is in its final stage of negotiations on a text on principles and guidelines for international arms transfers. I trust that the Working Group will successfully conclude work on agenda item 4 by adopting a consensus text. All delegations are, of course, invited to help the Chairman, Mr. Chirila.

Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament

The Chairman: With respect to Working Group II on item 5, divergent views have been expressed during the course of its deliberations. This plenary meeting has in fact been convened, following the adoption of the report of Working Group II half an hour ago, specifically to give delegations the opportunity to talk on record about the Chairmen's working paper that will be attached to the report of the Commission; we have records only in plenary meeting, and thus, none of their golden words will be lost. That is also why I have asked Ambassador Erdenechuluun to sit at my side and cover me if shells come in.

Mr. Vattani (Italy): First of all, on behalf of the European Union, I should like to thank you, Sir, for your initiative in allowing us, at the end of these two weeks' work, to give our comments on the results achieved in Working Group II, and especially on the working paper of the Chairman of the Working Group. Through you, all the partners of the European Union would like first to extend their heartfelt thanks to our Chairman, Ambassador Erdenechuluun, and to the Secretariat, for their untiring efforts.

The European Union considers that these two weeks have produced a very interesting and stimulating discussion. As members of the European Union, we have tried our best to contribute to the positive atmosphere, making statements on 23 and 30 April. We are very happy that today's statements, along with other contributions from other delegations regarding the paper submitted by the Chairman of the Group, will be put on record and will help us in our future work.

I would just like to recall that in our statement of 30 April we tried to put forward some basic principles which we felt could be shared by all delegations participating in the Disarmament Commission. We tried our best, and we are happy that the comments from other delegations belonging to other regional groups were in general very positive.

But this is an appropriate occasion for us to demonstrate our gratitude to our Chairman for his efforts in producing his paper. We think that it is a good document which the European Union felt that it could accept with just a few constructive changes. I think that it could be to the benefit of all participants here to know the basic elements that the European Union considers to be essential. Indeed, if we had been able to put these elements into the Chairman's paper, we could have endorsed it.

96-85625 (E)

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

First, I would like to refer to the date of a fourth special session on disarmament (SSOD). The exact date for convening SSOD IV could be decided towards the end of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Naturally, the decision, in the view of all the members of the European Union, should be taken by consensus.

As concerns the balance between items on nuclear disarmament and those on conventional disarmament, the European Union felt that the text submitted by the Chairman needed a clear reference to an agenda balance between items on weapons of mass destruction and those on conventional weapons.

As concerns non-proliferation, we think that it is a concern of all the members of the international community that a clear reference to non-proliferation be contained in the document submitted to us. The European Union made suggestions for adding a clear reference to non-proliferation to the document.

On certain other elements, I would like to stress that the European Union believes that the use of "shopping lists" of items could be counterproductive and detract from a focused debate at SSOD IV. That is why we proposed a three-stage debate; we actually received very positive responses from many delegations belonging to different regional groups. I should like to recall the three stages of this debate. The discussion could be structured, first, on developments in the international situation relevant to disarmament and non-proliferation following the end of the cold war; secondly, on the recent progress achieved in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation to enhance international peace and security; and, finally and most important, on future directions.

With the elements that I have indicated and with these very few changes, the European Union felt that the paper submitted by the Group Chairman could have provided a very good basis for future work. But in any case, we are happy that the document which the Chairman submitted on his own responsibility is complemented by contributions from delegations.

I would like to repeat that, in this phase of the preparation of SSOD IV, the European Union's approach is centred on a discussion of general principles rather than of items. We believe that SSOD IV could be useful in giving new life to multilateral disarmament efforts if consensus were reached on basic principles.

To conclude, I would like to say that the members of the European Union welcome the non-confrontational mood that we have witnessed here during these two weeks of work. We hope that this is going to be a beacon for the First Committee in its work this fall in the search for a consensus resolution on SSOD IV.

Mr. Rider (New Zealand): Through you, Mr. Chairman, I would like to place on record my delegation's very sincere thanks to Ambassador Erdenechuluun for his work in orchestrating our debate in Working Group II during the past two weeks. The support he received from the Secretariat was also much appreciated.

I shall be brief. New Zealand's substantive position on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) was set out in the paper which I presented to the Working Group on 30 April, and which I have asked should become an official working paper of Working Group II. I will not repeat the details in that paper. I would like to place on record New Zealand's support for the Chairman's paper, which we consider provides a very valuable summation of views expressed during our exchange on a full special session on disarmament. We believe that it will provide a useful basis for further discussion on the special session at this year's General Assembly session.

New Zealand is, like the European Union, hopeful — indeed, confident — that the positive spirit we have seen displayed here over the past two weeks will be evident at the General Assembly.

Mr. Madden (United States of America): First, I want to thank Ambassador Erdenechuluun for his considerable efforts in guiding Working Group II in constructive dialogue and productive work. The paper which our Chairman personally produced is a valuable contribution and may serve as the basis for further work.

I note the statement in the Working Group report that the Chairman's paper represents his personal views only and does not prejudice in any way the views of any participant. The Chairman's statement notes that there was wide agreement in the Working Group that the fifty-first session of the General Assembly should decide the date for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). During our debate, the United States and others observed that it would be best to prepare thoroughly for an SSOD before deciding on a date. My delegation believes that it would

be risky to predict now that we would be ready to decide on a date for convening SSOD IV during the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. As suggested by the European Union during Working Group debate, a decision on a date to convene SSOD IV should be made through a consensus resolution of the General Assembly.

The introductory paragraph in the Chairman's paper mentions the need for thorough and adequate preparation, a statement which the United States delegation believes should have been broadened to include the need for pre-agreement on the objectives and desired results of SSOD IV. As Ambassador Ledogar made clear in his statement, which has been made an official document of the Working Group, the cost of an SSOD will be significant in times of scarce financial resources. My delegation therefore believes that the cost of an SSOD should have been mentioned in the Chairman's paper, as a means of showing that the meeting would represent a major commitment of scarce resources and should not be lightly undertaken.

My delegation believes that the "Objectives" section of the Chairman's paper should have contained language on the need for a proper balance among nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, conventional arms and other disarmament issues. Similarly, my delegation believes that non-proliferation should have been specified as a general principle and objective. Some delegations submitted suggestions on topics which an SSOD might discuss, but when taken together, much more attention was devoted to nuclear weapons.

The next special session would take place in changed circumstances, after the end of the cold war. There should be discussion on the whole range of disarmament issues, with due attention devoted to dramatic advances, including deep reductions already made in nuclear weapons, and to the need for continuing reductions in conventional arms, as well as to prospects for the future in disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Parnohadiningrat (Indonesia): The States members of the non-aligned group agreed to request the representative of Colombia, as Chairman of the group, to deliver a statement on behalf of the non-aligned members, and to offer comments on the Chairman's paper. However, as the representative of Colombia is not present, and with the permission of non-aligned member States, I would like to make the following statement.

On behalf of the States members of the Commission belonging to the Non-Aligned Movement, my delegation would, first, like to express its appreciation to the Chairman of Working Group II, on the fourth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD IV), for submitting his working paper (A/CN.10/1996/WG.II/WP.6). We welcome the efforts made by the Ambassador of Mongolia, as Chairman of the Working Group on an exchange of views on SSOD IV, to generate discussion in the Working Group as an initial step towards a structured process for preparing the convening of SSOD IV, as called for in resolution 50/70 F. As a preliminary remark, the Non-Aligned Movement would like to state that it can go along with the regional thrust of the paper, which the Non-Aligned Movement considers a positive step towards the convening of SSOD IV.

The Non-Aligned Movement would like to stress that resolution 50/70 F calls for the establishment of a Preparatory Committee for SSOD IV to prepare a draft agenda for the special session, to examine all relevant questions relating to that session and to submit its recommendation thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. However, taking into account the need to conduct thorough and adequate preparations for the successful conclusion of SSOD IV, it is the view of the Non-Aligned Movement that the Preparatory Committee should be convened before the end of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

The Non-Aligned Movement expressed its views on the objectives of SSOD IV in its working paper, which states:

> "With respect to the objectives of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries believe that the special session should set the future course of action in the field of disarmament and related security matters and, in this context, emphasize the importance of multilateralism in the process of disarmament, bearing in mind the historical significance of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament, and principles, guidelines and priorities envisaged therein, as well as the need to preserve and build upon the achievements of the first special session devoted to disarmament." *(A/CN.10/1996/WG.II/WP.3, para. 3)*

The Non-Aligned Movement also submitted in its paper an indicative list of possible substantive issues for consideration by the Preparatory Committee of SSOD IV.

Those are the preliminary views of the Non-Aligned Movement which should be further addressed during the forthcoming Preparatory Committee meetings of SSOD IV.

Mr. Larsen (Norway): Like previous speakers, I will be very brief in thanking you, and in thanking Ambassador Erdenechuluun for his excellent work in our Working Group. I also thank the Secretariat for their efforts.

I would like to refer to the statement previously made by Italy on behalf of the European Union. Norway fully associates itself with that statement. We thank the Chairman of Working Group II for having produced a good personal working paper. We agree with the European Union that certain elements could have been included, specifically a reference to the need for a consensus decision to be taken upon the convening of a fourth special session devoted to disarmament, with which we agree in principle.

The need for a balanced approach between nuclear and conventional weapons is also an important element for us. A reference to non-proliferation would have been welcome as well. The European Union also made the point that a "shopping list" of items could detract from focused debate. We think that is a good and valid point which should be taken into account. We should look at the whole range of disarmament issues in that context.

We also agree with the United States delegation that the cost of convening SSOD IV could have been mentioned.

Again, we thank the Chairman of the Group for his personal contribution to creating a very constructive and positive atmosphere in the Working Group, which bodes well for the future.

Mr. Snell (Canada): Through you, Mr. Chairman, we too would like to express our appreciation for the serious and extensive efforts of the Chairman of Working Group II to find common ground among members of the Working Group on SSOD IV. We think that the working paper prepared by him demonstrates the depth of the commitment of all delegations to continue serious discussion on this issue. We are also pleased and encouraged by the constructive spirit of the various working papers submitted by delegations during the course of the past two weeks.

My delegation would like to note our support, in particular, for the thrust of the working paper submitted by the New Zealand delegation. We believe it outlines quite well most of the elements necessary for this discussion to develop practical, achievable and forward-looking ideas.

We look forward to continued productive discussion on the holding of a fourth special session devoted to disarmament.

Mr. Felicio (Brazil): The delegation of Brazil considers that the objectives of the Disarmament Commission in considering agenda item 5, on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, have been fully met. What we wanted was to start the process of preparation for SSOD IV, and I think we were successful in our endeavours.

In the Working Group presided over by the representative of Mongolia with his very well-known ability, our preliminary exchange of views was very useful and constructive.

We are all aware that discussions in the Disarmament Commission about SSOD IV are not intended to replace the appropriate work to be carried out by the Preparatory Committee of the special session. No formal decision is to be taken by this Commission, and the documents produced here have only a reference value. These documents, however, will certainly be very useful in our future work in preparation for the fourth special session devoted to disarmament.

Mr. Kellar (Germany): Let me, through you, Mr. Chairman, thank Ambassador Erdenechuluun for the very constructive way he guided us in Working Group II.

I would like to make some additional remarks about what Ambassador Vattani said on behalf of the European Union. In the view of my delegation, one of the main achievements of the work done in Working Group II is the view shared by all of us that to be a successful exercise a future SSOD IV must be based on a common understanding of its scopes and its objectives. I would like to pay tribute to Ambassador Erdenechuluun; I think his working paper was very helpful and very constructive in that regard.

We welcome the spirit of consensus, which sharply contrasts with last year's session of the Disarmament Commission. We should try to preserve this constructive

mood to bring about a consensus resolution in this year's First Committee, to lay the ground for a future successful SSOD IV. A resolution this fall would be a decisive step forward towards such an endeavour. We would spoil the chances for a successful SSOD IV if we failed to bring about a consensus resolution. I think there is a general, wide agreement in this room about the necessity for such a consensus resolution as a basis for future endeavours. I hope we can preserve this spirit so as not to spoil the chances of our common endeavours.

Mr. Orlov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): First of all, I would like to associate myself with the assessments voiced by the Chairman of Working Group II, and with the expressions of gratitude for the great amount of work which was done by the Chairman personally and by the Secretariat.

We believe that we have had a useful exchange of views during the present session enabling us better to clarify the positions of participants in the discussion of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). We are going to study these views most carefully and shall duly take them into account.

I do not wish to repeat the views expressed by the Russian delegation in our statement earlier this session. We believe that the fourth special session devoted to disarmament should be an important large-scale international event, and should yield a substantive political result. We believe, therefore, that it should be extremely carefully prepared. I think that no one here is interested in having the future special session come to naught.

We find the working paper prepared by the Chairman of the Working Groups useful. We understand that producing such documents represents the art of dealing with what is possible, which is why they are useful. We think that this document will serve as a good basis for further work.

In conclusion, I should like to associate myself with those speakers who have noted the positive and non-confrontational atmosphere that prevailed during the work of our session; we hope that preparations for the special session devoted to disarmament will take place in precisely the same kind of constructive conditions.

Mr. Li Song (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): First of all, the Chinese delegation would like to thank sincerely the Chairman of Working Group II, the representative of Mongolia. We appreciate his efforts during the Group's session to coordinate the exchange of views on the fourth special session devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). We very much appreciate his efforts. We also thank the Secretariat for the tremendous amount of work it has done.

The Chinese delegation has on many occasions stated its support for the convening of SSOD IV. We feel that, in view of the new international situation, there is a need to hold a new special session to review the past and look to the future, so that the international community can jointly chart the future course of disarmament.

In recent years, many countries have put forward reasonable proposals on disarmament; China itself has proposed a series of measures to that end. The topic has been addressed in the relevant General Assembly resolutions of recent years. We feel that important issues in the field of disarmament could be discussed comprehensively and in depth at SSOD IV. The Chinese delegation believes that so long as all sides have the necessary political will, SSOD IV will certainly be successful.

We feel that the ideas and contributions presented by all sides with respect to SSOD IV at this session of the Disarmament Commission can be used as a basis for future discussions. We hope that the joint efforts of the international community will lead to the successful holding of the special session.

Mr. García (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation has followed very carefully the activities of Working Group II. On this occasion, we would like to express our gratitude for the efforts made by a number of delegations in the search for balance between the various positions which were put forward during our discussions. These delegations include members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the European Union and the delegation of New Zealand.

In addition, my delegation would like to express special appreciation for the work carried out by Ambassador Erdenechuluun in chairing Working Group II, which was very effective and, obviously, fruitful. Accordingly, my delegation wishes also to express its resolute support for the paper submitted by the Chairman of Working Group II. It will serve as a basis for future exchanges of views on the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Mr. Paek (Republic of Korea): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its deepest gratitude to Ambassador Erdenechuluun, Chairman of Working Group II, for his endeavours and dedication in the course of preparing the Chairman's paper, which was submitted yesterday. I believe that it will serve as a useful basis for our further deliberations.

We are pleased to note that the basic ideas or concepts contained in the Chairman's paper are in line with my Government's position. My delegation shares the view that the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) will provide us with an opportunity to review and assess the progress achieved thus far and to prepare better for the future, and that thorough and adequate preparation is the key to ensuring its successful outcome. We hope that further consultations will be held concerning the timing and agenda of SSOD IV to reach a consensus, as we have done thus far.

With regard to the agenda to be discussed at SSOD IV, it is my delegation's view that the idea of three major themes, or of a three-stage discussion, which was put forward by the representative of Italy, deserves more attention and further consideration as the basis of our future work on SSOD IV.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt): At the outset, my delegation associates itself fully with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. My delegation wishes to make some additional remarks on the subject under consideration.

First, I believe that at this time we should be working towards the substantive success of SSOD IV through an extensive and substantive preparation on the subject. We should not lose sight of the time factor, which is essential and has a key role to play in the success of such an event. We know this from the experience of the United Nations and of other negotiating forums.

In this regard, we think that the result of the vote on General Assembly resolution 50/70 F and the widely shared point of view expressed in the Working Group confirm what has been stated by the Chairman of the Working Group, the representative of Mongolia: that there is wide agreement on the need to decide on the timing of SSOD IV by the end of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

The Chairman's paper is very balanced. It does not concentrate on any particular aspect of disarmament — be it nuclear disarmament, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), conventional arms or others. Of course, the positions of various parties are still divergent, but the paper as such is very balanced, and that is why we join in the non-aligned support of it.

My last remark is a procedural question. We note that the non-aligned countries have presented their preliminary point of view in a paper. We note that the European Union has also presented its preliminary point of view in a paper, as has New Zealand. But we were expecting to receive such a communication from the nuclear States of their vision of the substance of the discussion at the fourth special session — apart from the question of timing: we know that we still have differences with regard to when the special session is to be held. But we were expecting a paper from the nuclear States indicating what subjects they wish to discuss if we are going to have a fourth special session. Apparently this has not appeared, but we still hope that such a paper will be provided in the near future, either here in the Disarmament Commission or during the work of the Preparatory Commission for the special session.

The Chairman: It might be noted that two States members of the European Union are nuclear-weapon States. It might also be noted that there is a working paper submitted by the United States indicated in the report of Working Group II. It might further be noted that the list of items that was originally part of the first draft of the working paper of the Chairman of Working Group II is no longer there, but that this was not the result of the doings of nuclear-weapon States.

I should like Ambassador Erdenechuluun to take note of the many words of praise that have been addressed to him for his very positive work. Of course, we all know that he guided the Commission through last year's very difficult session. It is therefore apt that he should be guiding us now that a spirit of compromise and cooperation is prevailing at this session. We thank him very much.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.206

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

206th Meeting
Tuesday, 7 May 1996, 11 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Hoffmann . . . . . (Germany)

The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

Report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session

The Chairman: We are now addressing agenda item 6, regarding the consideration and adoption of the reports of the subsidiary bodies, and of the draft report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly (A/CN.10/1996/CRP.2 to CRP.5).

After the adoption of the reports, members will have an opportunity to make concluding statements.

I call first on the Chairman of Working Group I, on agenda item 4, to introduce the report of that Group.

Mr. Chirila (Romania), Chairman of Working Group I: It is both an honour and a privilege for me to introduce to the Disarmament Commission at its 1996 substantive session the report of Working Group I, on agenda item 4 (A/CN.10/1996/CRP.3).

I am happy to inform the Commission that, at its last meeting, on 3 May 1996, Working Group I adopted by consensus the text of the document entitled "Guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/30 H of 6 December 1991". The document contains the following parts: Introduction, including elements of definition; Scope; Principles; Ways and means, which is divided into two sections, National and International; and Institutional arrangements, also divided into two sections, Role of the United Nations and Other institutional arrangements.

For the sake of clarity, and following our discussion in the Committee of the Whole, I would like to outline revisions to the draft report, which I propose we agree upon officially.

In paragraph 1, "illicit arms traffic" has been changed to "illicit arms trafficking".

In paragraph 13, "the following principles" should be replaced by "the principles listed below".

For the sake of uniformity, I propose to begin paragraph 41 "By its resolution 43/75 I of 7 December 1988, the General Assembly ...".

In paragraph 43, "Register of Conventional Arms" should be followed by a full stop. The following sentence should begin "It, *inter alia*, called upon all Member States ...".

In paragraph 45, "for peace and stability" should be replaced by "upon peace and stability".

In paragraph 46, "General Assembly called upon" should read "General Assembly, *inter alia*, called upon".

In paragraph 47, in the second line, "illicit arms trafficking was" should be replaced by "illicit arms trafficking is", and in the fifth line, "increased" should be changed to "increase".

As for the note which in the draft report is in the last part of page nine, I propose to make the note a foot

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This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

note to page eight — where paragraph 46 will figure in the report — to read "a) annexed to document A/46/301".

Also for the sake of uniformity, on the basis of comments and suggestions from delegations, I propose, first, to cite the relevant resolutions with their dates of adoption throughout the text of the guidelines, and secondly, to mention also the titles of the resolutions.

Allow me to say a few words about the document itself. Focused primarily on illicit arms trafficking, but also offering some important developments in the general framework of international arms transfers, the document is meant to provide a balanced and constructive contribution to the promotion and implementation of a set of principles and guidelines for the conduct of States in the sensitive and increasingly important domain we now call micro-disarmament, and in the monitoring and promotion of self-restraint in that field without affecting the legitimate rights of States to self-defence.

Mr. Chairman, as you stressed at the beginning of this session, it was high time that the Disarmament Commission had a success story after three years during which the Commission failed to reach consensus or to recommend to the General Assembly substantive documents on disarmament-related issues.

Reaching consensus on a substantial and fully elaborated document in such a complex and sensitive field as international arms transfers, with a special focus on illicit arms trafficking, taking into account and reflecting the interests, concerns and views of all, was made possible by the following factors. First was the existence of a good basis for negotiations in the Chairman's working paper (A/CN.10/1994/WG.I/CRP.6) from the previous session, achieved under your personal guidance, Mr. Chairman, at the 1995 session of the Disarmament Commission after an initial examination of the subject in 1994, under Colombia's chairmanship of the Working Group. The second factor was a maximum use of logistics by the Working Group. The third factor, in my opinion, was the dedication and efforts of delegations, including those expressing some concerns about the feasibility of finalizing a document in two weeks of negotiations.

Another factor, in my opinion, was a spirit of openness and cooperation conducive to a positive political attitude and a genuine spirit of compromise. A final important factor was a prevailing spirit of realism coupled with a high level of professionalism on the part of delegations.

The Working Group undertook the demanding task of organizing and condensing the material at hand to resolve the matters in brackets and the parallel competing formulations, and to further clarify conceptually issues, especially those related to the limitation between the licit and the illicit. For example, the wording "illicit arms trafficking" is consistently used in the document instead of various other formulations concerning non-licit phenomena. The result of our work is not perfect. Achieving a document imposed on us constraints and even broad compromises.

(spoke in French)

I take this opportunity to thank very warmly all those representatives who have contributed to this success by demonstrating a spirit of compromise and an understanding of the realities and constraints of all kinds which exist in such a difficult area to negotiate and — above all — to reach consensus in. I am very grateful to all those who, through their individual contributions, have helped the Chairman of the Working Group at difficult moments, even in situations which seemed quite hopeless at the time.

In my opinion, our Working Group was a good example of interaction between established diplomacy and the younger generation of diplomats. We all tried to look at that approach in the area of arms control and disarmament from a new, realistic and efficient perspective, taking into account the imperatives of regional and international security and stability.

I would like to extend to you at this point, Mr. Chairman, my most sincere thanks for the trust you have placed in me, and also for the warm support and encouragement which you have constantly given me.

I would like also to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and sincere thanks to the secretariat of our Working Group, particularly Mr. Timur Alasaniya, who demonstrated unwavering professionalism, Ms. Carolyn Cooper and Ms. Lidjia Komatina.

I also appreciated the support and friendship shown me by Mr. Prvoslav Davinić, Director of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, and by the Deputy Director, Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, and the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung. They were all a source of constant support and encouragement.

Chairing the Working Group on international arms transfers has been an honour and a pleasure for me. It was, moreover, a privilege for me to work under your leadership, Sir. Here I believe I speak on behalf of all representatives who participated in the negotiations in our Working Group.

By way of conclusion, as I submit the report of Working Group I, I also submit to the Commission and propose adoption by consensus of the document contained therein, entitled "Guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991".

The Chairman: If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group I on item 4 (A/CN.10/1996/CRP.3) regarding international arms transfers, as orally revised.

The report, as orally revised, was adopted.

The Chairman: We come next to the report of Working Group II on item 5, entitled "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament" (A/CN.10/1996/CRP.4).

I call on the Chairman of the Group, Ambassador Erdenechuluun, to introduce the report of Working Group II.

Mr. Erdenechuluun (Mongolia), Chairman of Working Group II: It is my great pleasure to introduce to the Disarmament Commission the report of Working Group II under agenda item 5, entitled "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament" (SSOD IV). The report is contained in document A/CN.10/1996/CRP.4.

Working Group II held 10 meetings between 23 April and 3 May 1996. It devoted three meetings to a general exchange of views, which was very constructive and useful. During the deliberations, a number of concrete proposals and ideas were put forward by various delegations for consideration by the Working Group. In addition, the Working Group has before it three non-papers, submitted by Indonesia on behalf of the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement and other States, Italy on behalf of the European Union, and New Zealand. As a result of the positive atmosphere that prevailed throughout the work of the Working Group, I was able to prepare a non-paper, the general thrust of which is based on the specific ideas and proposals presented to the Working Group.

In this connection, I wish to assert that the Chairman's non-paper, which is generally considered as laying the groundwork for future work, has, with the concurrence of the Working Group, been annexed, as the Chairman's working paper, to the present report of the Working Group. I should like to add that responsibility for the working paper rests solely with the Chairman, without any prejudice to the positions of Member States.

I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to Colombia, Chairman of the non-aligned group; Indonesia, Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement working group on disarmament; Italy, Chairman of the European Union group; New Zealand; and the United States of America, all of whose cooperation and active participation contributed immensely to the work of the Working Group and made my difficult task easier. My thanks go equally to all delegations for the valuable cooperation and support that they extended to me during this session of the Disarmament Commission.

Despite deep-seated differences, the exchange of views on SSOD IV was distinguished by a surprising display of good will and realism and a spirit of cooperation and understanding among delegations. I hope that this positive, and I venture to say ground-breaking, new atmosphere will augur well for our future endeavours.

Allow me on this occasion, Mr. Chairman, to express my thanks to you for your valuable support throughout the session.

I should also like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretariat staff, especially the officers of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Mohammad Sattar and Ms. Agnes Marcaillou, for the efficient manner in which they helped move the work of the Working Group forward. I also thank the interpreters and conference officers, who have always demonstrated understanding and good will in assisting us in our work.

In conclusion, I should like to note that at its 10th meeting, on 3 May, Working Group II considered and approved its present report by consensus.

I have the honour to submit the report of Working Group II to the Disarmament Commission for its consideration and approval.

The Chairman: If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group II on item 5 (A/CN.10/1996/CRP.4) regarding the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The report was adopted.

The Chairman: We turn now to the report of the Committee of the Whole on item 7 (A/CN.10/1996/CRP.5) regarding any other matters related to the work of the Disarmament Commission. In this regard, I, as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, would like to introduce the report of the Committee.

The Disarmament Commission, at its 204th meeting, on 30 April, upon the request of a large number of delegations, decided to entrust the Committee of the Whole with the task of considering two particular issues: first, tentative dates and duration for the 1997 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, and secondly, appropriate approaches or mechanisms for selecting subject-matters to be included in the agenda of the Disarmament Commission in the future.

As a result of consultations, the Committee agreed that the tentative dates and duration of the 1997 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission will be from 21 April to 12 May 1997, with the understanding that the exact dates for the session will be formally decided upon at the Commission's organizational session in December 1996.

With regard to the selection of subject-matters for the Commission's agenda items, the Secretariat, upon the request of the Committee, prepared a list of subject-matters for possible inclusion on the Commission's agenda, which is now annexed to the report of the Committee of the Whole. The Committee also decided to set up an open-ended consultation group undertaking the task of preparing a list of subject-matters that could be agreed upon by Member States for inclusion on the agenda of the Commission, prior to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. This consultation group is being led by Indonesia. I hope that the consultation group will begin its work in the months ahead with a view to identifying certain promising subjects that could be acceptable to all delegations.

If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of the Committee of the Whole on item 7 (A/CN.10/1996/CRP.5), "Other business".

The report was adopted.

The Chairman: We shall now take up the draft report of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/1996/CRP.2).

I call on the Rapporteur of the Commission, Mr. Rajab Sukayri, representative of Jordan, to introduce this draft report to the Commission.

Mr. Sukayri (Jordan), Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission: It is my honour and pleasure to introduce to the Disarmament Commission the draft report of the Commission on its current session, as contained in document A/CN.10/1996/CRP.2.

In conformity with previous practice, the draft report contains four chapters: Introduction, Organization and work of the 1996 substantive session, Documentation, and Conclusions and recommendations. As in previous years, the document presents a factual description of the Commission's work and proceedings during the session.

With regard to the substantive parts of the work done by the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, chapter IV will contain the reports of the two Working Groups, which have just been adopted by the Commission. The report of the Committee of the Whole was also adopted a moment ago, concerning issues related to the work of the Commission. All those reports will automatically be incorporated into the draft report of the Commission.

I should like to draw the attention of representatives to the following changes in the draft report.

First, in paragraph 9, the fifth line should begin "the subject matter of nuclear-weapon-free zones".

The final sentence of the same paragraph should read "There was wide agreement on this point.".

Finally, in paragraph 22, the words "and other States" should be inserted after the word "Countries".

In my view, the work of the Disarmament Commission during the current session has gone very smoothly; generally speaking, it has been a successful

session. Working Group I, as indicated in the report before the Commission, was able successfully to conclude the item "International arms transfers, with particular reference to resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991". This remarkable achievement has come about as a result of the spirit of cooperation and compromise that prevailed among all participating delegations. The Chairman of the Working Group, Mr. Gheorghe Chirila, is to be commended for the excellent manner in which he led the deliberations on this highly sensitive and most important question of international arms transfers.

The same friendly and cooperative atmosphere prevailed also during the deliberations of Working Group II, which made it possible to reach consensus on the adoption of the Chairman's non-paper. That paper offers a good basis for future work on the exchange of views with regard to the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Ambassador Erdenechuluun's leadership is to be commended for the excellent work and the most satisfactory result we have reached in this regard.

The only serious difficulties experienced during this session were of an organizational rather than a substantive nature. I refer here to the lack of consensus on the exact title of the subject-matter for a third substantive agenda item. As indicated in the draft report of the Commission, in spite of the overwhelming support that the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones had received, divergent views among a very few delegations on the exact wording of the title made it impossible to reach consensus on the inclusion of this item during the current session. We hope that such consensus will be possible next year, especially since there has been a general understanding among the majority of delegations to take up this issue at the next substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

On the other hand, and in addition to the success both Working Groups achieved this year, the Committee of the Whole has adequately addressed the question of compiling a composite list of possible items to be included in the agenda of the Disarmament Commission. The establishment of an open-ended consultation group to undertake this task has been a step in the right direction. In this area, as well as in all other positive achievements, the Chairman of the Commission, Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann, is to be commended.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to Mr. Prvoslav Davinić, Director of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, and other members of the Secretariat for the diligent efforts, which greatly helped make this session of the Disarmament Commission a success. In particular I should like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung, Secretary of the Commission, and his colleagues for the invaluable and indispensable assistance they extended to me personally in the preparation of the Commission's draft report.

Moreover, the confidence shown by the Disarmament Commission in electing me as its Rapporteur has been a great honour and privilege for my country, Jordan, as well as for me personally. I extend my sincere thanks to all member delegations. In particular, I should like to state on this occasion that I have been honoured to have served under your guidance, Mr. Chairman.

With this brief introduction, I now recommend that the Commission adopt its draft report, as contained in document A/CN.10/1996/CRP.2.

The Chairman: We shall consider the draft report of the Commission (A/CN.10/1996/CRP.2) chapter by chapter.

Since there are no comments on chapter I, "Introduction", paragraphs 1 to 3, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 1 to 3 were adopted.

The Chairman: Are there any comments on chapter II, "Organization and work of the 1996 substantive session", paragraphs 4 to 17?

Mr. Sarwat (Egypt): I have just one remark concerning the revision to the last line of paragraph 9: "There was wide agreement on this point."

First of all, I should like to express our regret that we were not able at this session to include an item on nuclear-weapon-free zones on this year's agenda. We certainly hope that it will be on next year's agenda. In this context, I should like to say that we would have preferred the sentence to remain as it was: "There was general agreement on this point." For the convenience of some delegations, we could have added the words "with the exception of one, or a few, delegations".

I simply wished to record our position on this point, but we are ready to go along with the consensus agreement of this Commission.

The Chairman: If there are no further comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt chapter II, paragraphs 4 to 17.

Paragraphs 4 to 17 were adopted.

The Chairman: We turn next to chapter III, "Documentation", paragraphs 18 to 26.

Since there are no comments on paragraphs 18 to 26, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 18 to 26 were adopted.

The Chairman: We turn next to chapter IV, "Conclusions and recommendations", paragraphs 27 to 31. The blanks in paragraphs 29 to 31 will be filled in by the Secretariat at a later date with the reports adopted earlier. Since there are no comments on these paragraphs, may I take it that the Commission wishes to adopt them?

Paragraphs 27 to 31 were adopted.

The Chairman: Having adopted all paragraphs of the report, the Commission will now take up the draft report as a whole. May I take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the draft report as a whole, as orally revised?

The draft report, as orally revised, was adopted.

The Chairman: The Commission has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 6.

Concluding statements

Mr. Fulci (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and of the following countries associated with it: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have also asked to join in our statement.

At the opening of this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, we pledged our full cooperation and expressed our confidence that under your able guidance, Sir, the proceedings of this session would bear fruitful results. Despite the Commission not finding this year common agreement on the inclusion in the agenda of a third substantive item, we consider that the outcome of the 1996 session is encouraging for the future work of the Disarmament Commission. We welcome the cooperative mood which has prevailed at the session and hope that it can be built upon at this year's session of the First Committee.

The international community rightly devotes much attention to all aspects of arms transfers, and in particular to illicit arms trafficking. We therefore express satisfaction that Working Group I was able to adopt by consensus a set of guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991. We wish also to express our appreciation to its Chairman, Mr. Chirila, for his strenuous search for compromise on this difficult and complex issue.

We reiterate our support for the principle of consensus in the Disarmament Commission. The agreement on international arms transfers guidelines illustrates that, if flexibility is shown on all sides, this can work. This consensus also illustrates the value of maintaining focus on a balanced disarmament agenda and specific items. Conventional items are susceptible to global treatment, in the same manner as nuclear items. Consideration should also be given to follow-up work on conventional items at the Conference on Disarmament.

As stated at the opening of this session, in the case of licit transfers, comprehensive controls for arms exports and effective enforcement of those controls are essential, as is increased transparency in international arms transfers, in particular through the submission of full returns to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. In this context, a code of conduct could also be a way forward. In the case of illicit trafficking, countries should focus on improved national legislative measures and their effective implementation, as well as on improving international cooperation and coordination. These guidelines now allow us to look forward to further concerted international action for dealing with this pressing problem in all its dimensions.

Working Group II, on "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament", has produced an interesting and stimulating discussion. We are indeed grateful to the Permanent Representative of Mongolia, Ambassador Erdenechuluun, for his Chairman's paper, which we feel provides many useful elements for future work.

The European Union played its part in this discussion by putting forward, in its two statements of 23 and 30 April, the basic principles which we felt were

shared by all participating delegations. We hope this will help to build the consensus necessary both for a successful resolution at this year's session of the First Committee and for the fourth special session itself. We believe that the fourth special session could be useful in giving new life to multilateral disarmament efforts if consensus is reached on basic principles and objectives.

We wish to reiterate our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the skilful and able manner in which you, Sir, have presided over our proceedings at this particularly demanding session.

We would like also to pay tribute, once again, to the Bureau and the Chairmen of the Working Groups for all their untiring action, as well as to the Commission secretariat and to the interpreters for all their assistance and cooperation at this session.

Mr. García (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to make a brief statement on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

First of all, I wish to extend our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on the wisdom with which you guided the work of the Disarmament Commission at this substantive session. Your leadership has made a significant contribution to the excellent atmosphere that prevailed in our deliberations, which were always cordial and undertaken in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation.

This session of the Commission completed one stage of a process that began in the United Nations in 1988. The Commission's work over the past three years has culminated in the adoption by consensus of a document setting out guidelines to be followed by States to eliminate illicit arms trafficking. It is gratifying to note that, after all these years of work, we have finally succeeded in drafting the guidelines for international arms transfers.

The adoption of the guidelines for international arms transfers, despite their complexity, shows that the Commission can continue to play an important role in the disarmament process. As it has done in the past, the Commission has successfully managed to identify, prepare and recommend various measures for negotiation in the appropriate forums.

In this connection, the non-aligned countries would like to thank the Chairman of Working Group I, Mr. Chirila of Romania, for his wise guidance of the Group's work, which led to the successful conclusion of the consideration of agenda item 4, "International arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991".

The consideration of agenda item 5, "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament", was truly encouraging. Various States and groups of States expressed views that can be used as reference for the immediate future. It is clear that there is now broad agreement on the need to convene the fourth special session. Some disagreements remain to be addressed, however, on the objectives, preparatory process and time-frame for the fourth special session. The non-aligned countries feel sure that at this session the Commission has laid the groundwork for the preparatory process so as to ensure the successful convening of the fourth special session.

As to the objectives of the fourth special session, the non-aligned countries submitted their position in document A/CN.10/1996/WG.II/WP.3. We state for the record our appreciation to the Chairman of Working Group II, Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, for his work in guiding the Group's deliberations as a first step in a structured process leading to preparations for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, pursuant to resolution 50/70 F. On a preliminary basis, we can state our agreement with the overall spirit of document A/CN.10/1996/WG.II/WP.6, which we feel to be a positive step in our preparations for the fourth special session.

Although we regret that consensus was not reached on a third substantive agenda item, we believe that the Commission will achieve the necessary agreements in the future to address this temporary situation. Having considered only two substantive agenda items should not set a precedent.

In conclusion, I wish once again to thank you, Sir, for the way in which you presided over our work, which made a significant contribution to the successful outcome of our deliberations. We also reiterate our thanks to the Chairmen of the Working Groups, to the Director of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Davinić, to Mr. Lin, Secretary of the Commission, and to the Secretariat in general, including the interpreters, translators and administrative staff.

Mr. Deimundo Escobal (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation wishes to make the following observations on the work done at this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

Our delegation welcomed the results achieved in Working Group I on guidelines for international arms transfers. The document that has been adopted is the Commission's most outstanding in the past five years. We feel that it is important because it guarantees the clear and precise establishment of important recommendations on controlling international arms transfers and provides direction and a general framework for the individual efforts of States to prevent illicit arms transfers.

One positive achievement in this field is the recognition by all States of their obligation to make responsible and restrained use of international arms transfers and of the need for common, appropriate and effective criteria for control. Far from being perceived as interference in the internal affairs of States, control of international arms transfers should be seen in the broader context of enhancing trust and transparency. Hence, the establishment of the Register of Conventional Arms was an important confidence-building measure and a concrete mechanism for enhancing security.

On the exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, we feel that the discussions in Working Group II, based on the various working papers and statements made on the topic, were an important step forward. We feel that the Disarmament Commission has neither the capacity nor the powers to determine the issues to be discussed at the fourth special session. We do believe, however, that the working papers submitted by the delegations of the United States, Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and New Zealand, as well as the non-paper submitted by the Chairman of the Working Group faithfully reflect the points of view of some States on this agenda item. We also believe that the working paper submitted by Italy on behalf of the European Union contains important basic guidelines for shaping a future special session.

We feel that all the working papers submitted and statements made demonstrate the necessity of providing any eventual fourth special session with real and pragmatic content; otherwise, we will merely be repeating a sterile exercise which, because of its content, would not enjoy consensus among the members of the international community.

The work of the Disarmament Commission in the past few years needs to be assessed in its own right. We feel that the only way for this Commission to work and achieve concrete results is for its agenda to contain items arising out of genuine consensus among States. We feel that this is the challenge we are facing: to identify items and subject them to deep analysis. This will greatly enhance our credibility and hence, perhaps, that of other forums.

Ms. Hamilton (Australia): Like other speakers, I wish to express the appreciation of the Australian delegation to you, Sir, for your role in bringing this session to a successful finish. Your decisiveness and experienced pragmatism drew us from a troubled beginning of the 1996 session of the Disarmament Commission to a successful conclusion.

We were disturbed by the inability of all delegations to agree on subject-matter for a third substantive agenda item. Given the endorsement by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of the further development of the network of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a contribution to enhanced global and regional security, and the highly positive developments which the international community has to report this year — the establishment of the African and South-East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones — we believe that it should have been possible for delegations to agree on an approach for discussion of nuclear-weapon-free zones in order that the time set aside for the Working Group could be used profitably.

Australia welcomes the completed guidelines for international arms transfers produced by Working Group I. We would like to warmly congratulate Ambassador Chirila for his businesslike attitude in helping delegations to reach consensus in the context of strong national positions on sensitive issues. His practical approach to tapping the determination in the Working Group to produce a creditable and consensus outcome was critical to completion of the task.

The report of Working Group I translates the sentiment of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H into a sound basis for cooperation among States to combat the illicit arms trade, and includes guidelines to assist each of us in developing legislative and administrative infrastructures at the national level.

Australia is fully cognizant of the serious threat posed to the security and stability of States by unregulated access to small, lethal conventional arms, and we fully support all efforts in United Nations and other qualified organizations to stem the tide. We should bear in mind that legal arms transfers can also be destabilizing. Australia welcomes the references in the Working Group report to transparency measures. We encourage all countries to participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and we encourage efforts to enhance its operation and effectiveness.

We would also like to pay tribute to Ambassador Erdenechuluun for his work as Chairman of Working Group II, on agenda item 5. His treatment of the subject of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) integrated well the range of positions held by delegations, further spelt out in thoughtful papers put forward by delegations of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the European Union, and by New Zealand. The Chairman's working paper provides us with a good basis on which to proceed.

I wish to recall that Australia supported resolution 50/70 F. We are concerned to ensure that SSOD IV is scheduled in such a way that it has adequate time to prepare and the best possible story to tell — for example, to report a successfully concluded comprehensive test-ban treaty, and that the meeting itself provides a forward-looking framework for future concrete disarmament undertakings.

All members need to work to ensure the adoption of a manageable and constructive agenda well in advance of future sessions of the Disarmament Commission so that our deliberations can be as well-informed and productive as possible. In that light we commend your efforts, Mr. Chairman, in encouraging the drawing up of groups of issues that might provide subjects for Disarmament Commission consideration in the future. In an era when every moment of United Nations time has to be rigorously accounted for, and when the competing claims on resources have never been greater, Australia hopes that in future we will be able to make optimum use of the time allocated for the Disarmament Commission so as to advance the global disarmament agenda.

In conclusion, I would like to express Australia's appreciation to all delegations for making a strong effort to work back from the set-back at the beginning of the session in order to produce serious and constructive outcomes from the two Working Groups. We also thank the Commission secretariat, the translators and the interpreters for their dedicated work. It is Australia's view that the Disarmament Commission can play an essential and useful role if good faith and a constructive spirit are brought to bear.

Mr. Tapia (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First, my delegation would like join preceding speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on the efficient way in which you have presided over the work of the Disarmament Commission at this session. Through you, Sir, I would like to extend congratulations to the other members of the Bureau, in particular the distinguished representatives of Romania and Mongolia on their able leadership of Working Groups I and II respectively. We would also like to thank the Secretariat for its tireless work.

My delegation would like to say how pleased it is at the conclusion of the work of Working Group I on defining a set of guidelines for international arms transfers. The document prepared is an important achievement for the efforts of the international community to establish guidelines which would contribute to the cause of international peace and security and would support the Charter right of States to legitimate self-defence, as well as recognizing the need for disarmament.

My delegation believes that the dialogue begun in Working Group II, which dealt with an exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), was very positive and will be an effective contribution to the work that the Preparatory Committee will have to do for SSOD IV.

My delegation attaches particular importance to the holding of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The positive dialogue that has begun encourages us to look to the future with optimism. My delegation believes that we will have a major challenge to deal with in the future, and in this respect we agree with the comments of several other speakers about the need to carry out a thorough analysis of the items to be taken up at SSOD IV, which will have a significant impact on its output.

Finally, my delegation hopes that at the next substantive session of the Disarmament Commission we will not come up against the problems that we faced at this session — in other words, that we will, in time, have

a full agenda, prepared on a consensus basis, which will provide adequate time for consideration of the items. The great importance of the Disarmament Commission and its work requires this.

Mr. Wang Xiaoning (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): On behalf of the Chinese delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on the positive achievements of this session of the Disarmament Commission. We appreciate your diplomatic skills and experience. The Chinese delegation wishes also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau, including the Chairmen of the two Working Groups, the representatives of Mongolia and Romania. We would also like to thank the Secretariat; the Centre for Disarmament Affairs and its Director; our Secretary, Mr. Lin; and other meetings-services personnel, including the translators and interpreters. We appreciate their contribution to our work. We also wish to register our appreciation for the flexible attitude shown by various delegations.

We have successfully completed our consideration of the item on international arms transfers, and have formed a set of guidelines incorporating various points of view. China's view on arms transfer policy is that it should enhance recipient countries' ability to defend themselves without risking damage to international and regional peace, stability and security. It should not be used as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign States. We hope that principles in the guidelines can be realistically implemented.

China supports the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). We believe that, given the new international situation, there is a need to review the past and look into the future, so that the international community can collectively determine the direction of future disarmament efforts. It is our hope that in the future, and on the basis of the achievements of this session of the Disarmament Commission, all parties can continue to exchange views on disarmament, and reach consensus.

Finally, I would like to stress that the Chinese delegation has always appreciated the work of the Disarmament Commission. It is an important multilateral disarmament negotiating body and its role should be brought fully into play. China wants to cooperate with all countries to improve and enhance the work of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): First, I wish to say that I subscribe to the statement made by Ambassador García of Colombia on behalf of the non-aligned countries. Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to tell you and other members of the Bureau how grateful my delegation is for the way in which you have conducted the work of this session. My delegation would also like to thank the Secretariat for its valuable help to us in our work.

Now that we are preparing to conclude the work of the 1996 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, I would like put before representatives some of the impressions that my delegation has gained from this session. As we noted during the discussion, my delegation regrets that the Commission was not able to examine a third substantive item, relating to nuclear issues. This must not set a precedent. Because of the importance my country attaches to nuclear matters, and its particular interest in them, my delegation sincerely hopes that the Commission will be able to reach consensus and agree to consider a third item on nuclear issues, relating to nuclear-weapon-free zones, at its next session. We hope also that it will have sufficient time to consider the three items.

With regard to the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), I would like to salute the spirit which prevailed during the exchange of views. My delegation believes that the document submitted by the Chairman of the Working Group, Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, to whom I pay tribute, constitutes a good basis for our future work on a fourth special session, which should review achievements in the field of disarmament, and, in particular, point out what remains to be done to save future generations from all destructive scourges. My country, with others, will tackle the adoption of a consensus resolution during the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, and will emphasize the importance of good preparation to ensure the success of that session.

With regard to Working Group I, on the question of arms transfers, my delegation is particularly pleased at the adoption of its report, which will, we hope, constitute a first step towards the elimination of illicit trafficking and unregulated arms transfers, which fuel terrorism in many areas of the world. In this context I would like to welcome the role played by the Chairman of the Working Group, Mr. Chirila of Romania, who showed great patience, and whose approach facilitated our deliberations

and the adoption of a document containing precise and clear recommendations and principles.

Finally, I cannot but reiterate my country's commitment to the future of the Disarmament Commission, which must play an increasingly important role in disarmament. That is confirmed this year by the adoption of the document on arms transfers. Despite the absence of consensus on a third substantive item, a variety of subjects could be taken on in an optimal way and could facilitate a better understanding of sensitive and crucial problems relating to the security of mankind. My delegation again supports the proposal to reflect on a list of subjects negotiated in advance before being examined at future sessions. We will participate very actively in consultations of the open-ended consultation group chaired by Indonesia.

Mr. Aronsohn (United States of America): On behalf of my Government, I would like to thank the Chairmen of the two Working Groups for their leadership and management of two very difficult issues. The United States joined consensus to adopt the Commission's paper on international arms transfers, although it is not as rigorous as we would have liked. The lack of a definition of arms transfers — which was recognized in the Working Group as being a difficul' concept to define — as well as the lack of definitions for other key terms, will allow member States to interpret the paper as they think best. For its part, the United States will interpret the paper in accordance with its national laws; our ability to do so was a key element in our decision to join consensus on the Commission's paper. We ask that this be clearly reflected in the record of this proceeding.

Finally, allow me, Mr. Chairman, to express my Government's sincere gratitude to you for your leadership of this session.

Mr. Rivero Rosario (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First, I would like to say that we agree completely with the comments of Ambassador García of Colombia on behalf of the non-aligned countries. However, we would like to make a few general points. We, too, were sorry that we were not able to consider a third substantive item, on a nuclear theme. We trust that this will not set a precedent and that next year we will be able to resolve the problem.

The outcome of our work, and the reports of the Working Groups, lead us to the general view that the Disarmament Commission has emerged from this session strengthened and refreshed. In a positive way, we have shown the usefulness of this forum as a deliberative organ in which all Member States participate. Delegations, of course, have different views as to which items should be included in the agenda, or what subject-matter should be included under the various items. However, our results and the professionalism and political will we have witnessed in the debate lead us to the happy conclusion that the Commission has emerged from this session renewed.

The document which emerged from Working Group I is acceptable, and should be useful. It contains recommendations which will enable measures to be taken at the national and international levels to limit and eventually eliminate illicit arms trafficking. Our delegation believes that the implementation of the recommendations and, above all, the validity of the principles enshrined in them, should never be used in any way to impact upon or interfere in the internal affairs of States. The adoption of measures against illicit trafficking, certainly opens some general questions relating to transfers in general. The document describes in some detail the importance of transparency. However, transparency *per se* is not necessarily useful. It must be accompanied by an environment in which States can carry on their activities in security.

While we supported the document and find it acceptable, we would like to reiterate our position about the statement in paragraph 44 that the United Nations, the Disarmament Commission and other international forums should continue to work on the question of transparency, and particularly on the expansion of the Register of Conventional Arms.

The Cuban delegation stated its views on this at the last session of the General Assembly. We believed and continue to believe that the Disarmament Commission has very important tasks before it, which should be treated with priority. However, we agreed to the document in the sense that it should be considered in the various individual forums.

Concerning the work of Working Group II on the exchange of views on the fourth special session devoted to disarmament, our delegation was very pleased by the level of the exchange and the contributions that were made by many delegations and groups of delegations, as reflected in the Chairman's document.

We would have preferred that, with a view to preparing for that session, a meeting of the Preparatory

Committee could have been held in 1996. However, we think there must be agreement of all delegations to convene that important meeting. We are convinced and we hope that in the first part of the fifty-first session we will be able to take a final decision on the dates. We trust that the Preparatory Committee will begin its work as early as possible in 1997.

Having said that, all that remains for me to do is to extend my warmest congratulations and thanks to both Mr. Chirila and Ambassador Erdenechuluun for the tireless efforts and for the results of their work. I wish also to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Rapporteur and the Secretariat for your successful work.

Mrs. Peña (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to extend to you, Mr. Chairman, special thanks on behalf of my delegation for the very efficient manner in which you guided our deliberations. Your known experience and your diplomatic skills guaranteed from the outset that we would achieve success at this session of the Disarmament Commission.

We would also extend our thanks to the Chairmen of the Working Groups, Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia and Ambassador Chirila of Romania, for helping us make progress in the difficult tasks we faced. Thanks to their efforts, we have adopted two important documents: one on the exchange of views on the fourth special session devoted to disarmament, and another on international arms transfers, matters to which my delegation attaches particular importance. The adoption of the important document on arms transfers has provided us with a vital set of guidelines on this subject, and was a significant step towards continued progress in this very complex area.

In highlighting what has been achieved at this session, we must mention the flexibility and spirit of cooperation demonstrated by delegations.

Lastly, we would like to thank the Commission secretariat and the interpreters for their valuable help.

Mr. Moradi (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, we express our sincere thanks to you, Mr. Chairman, to the Chairmen of Working Groups I and II, Mr. Chirila of Romania and Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, as well as to the members of the Secretariat for your effective guidance and dedication, which helped bring about the success of this year's session of the Disarmament Commission.

Despite the limited time provided to Working Group I, on international arms transfers this year, as well as in 1995 and 1994, the Group was able to reach a consensus on principles, guidelines and recommendations on transfers and on illicit trafficking. This success was due to the cooperation of all delegations, in particular countries which rely on these weapons for their security. We hope that the spirit of cooperation shown on this issue will be carried over to our efforts in the field of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The document itself, despite some shortcomings, in particular its lack of clarification of the responsibilities of the largest producers of conventional arms, provides us with a good basis for our collective efforts in the field of conventional weapons.

Working Group II, dealing with the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), exceeded our expectations and succeeded in producing a Chairman's paper which contains the basic elements needed for careful preparation of SSOD IV, which in itself can give direction to the future course of the international community's action in the field of disarmament.

Having said that, I should emphasize that the Disarmament Commission did not reach agreement on a third substantive item, despite the overwhelming support for the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We hope that this does not set a precedent for future sessions of the Disarmament Commission. We also hope that all Member States will take advantage of this positive atmosphere and be guided by it in future consultations on a third item, as well as on a First Committee resolution on SSOD IV.

Mr. Hahm (Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Republic of Korea would like to express its appreciation for the dedication and able guidance which you have shown, Mr. Chairman, in presiding over the 1996 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. My delegation's deep gratitude goes also to Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia and Mr. Gheorghe Chirila of Romania, for successfully presiding over the Working Groups over the last two weeks.

My delegation welcomes the successful outcome of the work of Working Group I, noting with satisfaction that after extensive deliberations the Disarmament Commission has successfully concluded a set of guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H. My delegation

is convinced that these guidelines — the first code of conduct in this field — will pave the way towards enhancing transparency in international arms transfers and eradicating illicit arms transfers.

My delegation, however, is of the view that we still have a long way to go. In order for these positive new measures to be effective, each country should undertake the utmost efforts to improve and, if necessary, strengthen its national laws, regulations and administrative procedures. Furthermore, concerted efforts to establish uniform standards for international arms control and for regulating the export and import of arms should be further enhanced.

My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate the importance of submitting annual reports to the Register of Conventional Arms as an important confidence-building measure. In this context, my delegation strongly encourages those States which have not yet provided annual reports to the Register to do so at the earliest possible date.

On the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, my delegation shares the view set out in the Chairman's paper that the special session will provide us with an opportunity to review the progress achieved thus far and to prepare better for the future, and that adequate and solid preparation is the key to ensuring a successful outcome.

In that regard, we believe that the Chairman's working paper on SSOD IV will serve as a useful basis for our future work on the issue. We hope that further consultations concerning the timing and agenda of SSOD IV will be undertaken to reach a consensus, as we have done thus far.

Finally, my delegation regrets that it was not possible to include in the 1996 agenda of the Disarmament Commission a third substantive item, on guidelines and principles for nuclear-weapons-free zones, despite several months of strenuous efforts. Taking into consideration the importance of nuclear-weapons-free zones as an effective means to achieve a global non-proliferation regime, it is my delegation's hope that this item will be included in the next year's agenda through further discussions or consultations among delegations.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: No one would deny that this year's Disarmament Commission session had its ups and downs, both during the session and in the preparatory phase. There were moments when the outlook was rather bleak. It was unfortunate that it took us so long to agree on an item for this year's session and that we were not able to agree on a third substantive agenda item. We all know the reasons; I do not have to repeat them here.

I recall this background to help us better evaluate what we did achieve. In my view, we are entitled to consider this year's session an important step forward. Not only were we able to boast, for the first time since 1993, a Working Group that achieved concrete results, by adopting guidelines on international arms transfers — at this point I would like to extend my very special words of appreciation to the Chairman of Working Group I, Mr. Chirila of Romania, who really helped us through these difficult negotiations — we also managed to conduct discussions on the sensitive issue of the fourth special session devoted to disarmament, in a non-confrontational, cooperative manner which brought forward agreement on quite a number of elements. I would like, in particular, to highlight this new spirit. In that context, of course, it gives me very great pleasure to express my gratitude to the Chairman of Working Group II, Ambassador Erdenechuluun, for the excellent job he did in helping us reach this positive conclusion.

This year's achievements are only a beginning. We have to concentrate on the tasks ahead; we have to find new items for future sessions. I would therefore like to encourage everyone, in particular the interested delegations, to take an active part in that discussion and to assist the consultation group that we have established under the chairmanship of Indonesia. I think the list of possible items prepared by the Secretariat can serve as a good basis for that endeavour.

At the end of this session, I also wish to express my gratitude to all the Vice-Chairmen of the Commission and to our Rapporteur, Mr. Rajab Sukayri of Jordan — who did not always have an easy job — for their assistance and cooperation in carrying out the tasks entrusted to the Disarmament Commission by the General Assembly. Moreover, I am sure that the members of the Commission will join me in expressing our sincere thanks to the Centre for Disarmament Affairs. Particular thanks should go to the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung. Let me also convey thanks to the interpreters and the conference officers and to all those who have assisted the meetings of the Disarmament Commission at this session.

All we have done this year is to take some steps, but they were steps in the right direction. For the sake of future Disarmament Commission sessions, but also for the sake of this year's First Committee, let us try to keep up the momentum; if we succeed in that, this session will really have been a success.

Closure of the session

The Chairman: I declare closed the 1996 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.